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The Washington Monthly

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LETTERS

Union officers, profs wronged

Who cares what two disgruntled NEA employees think? ["Why the Largest Teachers Union Puts Its Staff First and Education Second," Bill Boyton and John Lloyd, May.]

I can tell you in the association where I belong I expect staff to give good advice. We pick the best for staff work and we reward them.

I also find it difficult to believe that the National Education Association's top officers aren't in control. They didn't get to be officers unless they have savvy.

How about an article by the NEA to hear their side of this story since it seems excluded from the article?

W. A. WHITMAN
Reston, Virginia

Despite its self-proclaimed "liberal" credentials, *The Washington Monthly* offers an abundance of material entirely too thoughtful and worthwhile to be the product of true contemporary "liberals."

Nowhere is this clearheadedness more evident than in your candid illumination of flaws in our government-controlled, unresponsive, insulated, wasteful public education system.

Whether describing the self-serving behavior of the National Education Association or commending the intelligent analysis of Diane Ravitch ["A Lonely Crusade for Classroom Standards," Phillip Keisling, May], you do more in a few pages to educate the public than many of our alleged schools accomplish in a few years.

Why this nation ever delegated control of its children to a vast public education bureaucracy is difficult to understand. But your efforts help reveal the magnitude of our blunder.

Public policy is beginning to consider education vouchers and tax credits as means to restore account ability and parental involvement. Education Secretary Bill Bennett has declared expanding parental choice to be one of his objectives.

As this debate gains momentum, readers are certain to benefit from your open-minded examination of this important issue.

ROGER MAGYAR
Director, Education Policy Studies
Sequoia Institute
Sacramento, California

With no less than two excellent articles on education in your May issue, I found it surprising that in "Tilting at Windmills" Charles Peters simplistically blames rising college costs on lazy and/or incompetent professors. It seems to me that it's a trifle more complicated than that.

First, I think it's important to realize that teaching is only part of what most university professors do. Some of the other activities professors fritter their time away with include competing for research dollars, conducting research, writing and publishing results, serving on committees, advising students, attending meetings, giving tutorials and independent studies, participating in professional organizations and activities, and public service activities. As a modestly paid and overworked assistant professor, I resent your implication that professors who are not carrying heavy teaching loads are off loafing.

Although I agree somewhat about problems with university administrations and the negative aspects of the tenure system, the reasons why classrooms might be empty are many. For many professors, the growing lack of interest in humanities and social sciences translates into shrinking enrollments. This is well documented in Paul Barrett's article on "The Premed Machine" and the reasons for high enrollments in organic chemistry. Secondly, one of the first things new professors today at research institutions learn is that career rewards do not come from excellence in teaching but rather from research and publications. This is not always explicitly stated but it is definitely there. A friend of mine at the University of Illinois, an assistant professor, one time had an associate professor say to her after she had spent a long afternoon discussing career goals with students, "You will never get

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anywhere in your career if you waste so much time with the students." This is the pervasive attitude and it works against putting in the time and energy and commitment to teaching activities.

JUDITH LISANSKY
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Mournful MD's; angry DO's

Paul Barrett's article, "The Premed Machine" [May], gave an unfortunately accurate picture of how we physicians continue to be educated. One of the unhappy consequences of our underdeveloped education for life is our inability to communicate feelingly with fellow physicians about any matter beyond medicine. We have managed to cut ourselves from those who would know best what a toll our daily stresses take.

However, there may be some ice cold comfort in knowing that Darwin shared similar concerns when he spoke of the effect of science on his broader interests: "I have almost lost my taste for pictures or music...*The loss of these tastes, this curious and* lamentable loss of the highest aesthetic tastes, is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect...and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

It seems, like Darwin, we must individually get an education in spite of our education. To do otherwise would make us superior technicians with an inexhaustible fund of knowledge but unhelpful to ourselves and others.

RICHARD D. KENNEY, M.D.
Charlotte, North Carolina

Your treatment of undergraduates' pathway to medical school, "The Premed Machine," dramatizes adequately the rigors faced. However, your author errs in characterizing osteopathic medicine as a "quasi-medical" system. This is a disservice to hundreds of college graduates who will be enrolling at the 15 state and privately supported osteopathic medical schools this fall.

Osteopathic college entrant Epstein will not be disappointed in his next four years of study. He will be more than quasi-challenged to master the basic science knowledge and clinical skills needed to become a part of the nation's fastest growing health profession.

JOHN BARSON, Ed.D.
President, American Association of
Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
Rockville, Maryland

Paul Barrett's article on "The Premed Machine" had the perspective of one who has been there. He clearly describes the process which eliminates many capable individuals who choose not to prostitute themselves.

In his description of how this happens, though, he missed what to me is a logical conclusion. Persons who toe the line in the early premed years are less likely to question traditional wisdom later in their medical training. Perhaps this is an unconscious effort on the part of medical school admissions committees to maintain the status quo.

Recent changes in admissions rules at Georgetown indicate that at least some admissions committees are big enough to admit change is due.

QUIGLEY PETERSON, M.D.
Cuba, New Mexico

Unfortunately, I cannot quarrel with most of the issues in "The Premed Machine." However, there are two points on which I wish to differ.

First, Mr. Epstein was doubtless admitted to a college of osteopathic medicine (no longer called a college of "osteopathy"), at which he will be taught some techniques of manipulative therapy, in addition to all of those subjects taught in other medical schools. Colleges of osteopathic medicine grant the D.O. degree, which is legally and practically equivalent to the M.D. In many states, D.O.'s and M.D.'s take the same licensure examinations. In those states where separate exams are given, the degrees remain legally equivalent. Many, if not most, of the students at colleges of osteopathic medicine are there because they prefer the philosophical emphasis on holistic medicine and primary patient care that those schools espouse. Those who choose to specialize often do residencies side-by-side with M.D.'s. The director of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke is Murray Goldstein, D.O.

Second, undergraduate organic chemistry courses may well reek of the sweat of premeds' brows and the sulfurious fumes of murderous competition. But "organic," as it pertains to medicine and to daily life, is vitally important. The catch, of course, is in the phrase, "as it pertains to..." Organic chemistry is at the heart of biochemistry, microbiology, pharmacology, and physiology—some of the basic sciences taught in all medical schools. Furthermore, *any* citizen with a basic course in organic and biochemistry is more competent to evaluate public issues such as acid rain, "yellow rain," leaded fuels, nutrition (including fad diets, "health" foods, and vitamins), drugs (licit and illicit), and toxic wastes. So the question is not whether organic chemistry is useful, but whether the organic course is relevant to the students' needs.

It is true that organic chemistry requires a certain amount of memorization; so does reading, at the beginning. Good physicians, like good readers, have just forgotten that they weren't born knowing the most fundamental aspects of their discipline. Organic should not be taught to premeds and other non-majors as it is taught to budding chemists: the field is huge now, boasting more subspecialties than does medicine. But any good organic chemist, with the help of some medical school teachers of basic sciences, should be able to design a useful, and even exciting, course for non-majors, if college officials permit it.

Neither of these points of disagreement counter the thrust of "The Premed Machine," but perhaps the following observation does: of the 180 students that I have taught in the past two years, most (more than

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Forbes adds the National Magazine Award for Design to its recent awards for best editor and best publisher.

In January 1985, Adweek named Forbes' editor, James Michaels, Editor of the Year. In January 1984, Malcolm Forbes was chosen Publisher of the Year by the Magazine Publishers Association. And now, the American Society of Magazine Editors has awarded Forbes the Ellie for the National Magazine Award in Design—the first consumer magazine in the business field to win this prestigious award.

The award is meant, states the Society, "to honor a magazine for the contribution its design has made to its editorial objectives and for the overall excellence of its physical presentation." Since overall excellence is what every issue of Forbes is designed to achieve, this recognition is most gratifying.

Forbes was cited by the Society for employing "wit, irreverence and imagination to jar its readers into fresh thought." We couldn't have stated the magazine's objectives any better. But the ultimate award is shown in innumerable studies which have found consistently that Forbes is read regularly by more corporate officers in the country's largest companies than any other business or news magazine. Not only that, but among the three leading business magazines, top management rates Forbes its favorite.

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90 percent), are not only competent and strongly motivated students, they are kind and considerate people. They give me hope for the profession of medicine.

EDYE E. GROSECLOSE, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine
North Miami Beach, Florida

Life Insurance: who profits

In selecting a reviewer for Ron Kessler's book ["What's Wrong With Life Insurance," Philip M. Stern, May], the *Monthly* chose a former colleague of Kessler's at *The Washington Post*. Perhaps that explains why the reviewer found the book "powerful (and) well documented."

Another critic of the life insurance business (there are a few!), was not so kind to the book. Joseph Belth, professor of insurance at Indiana University, says the book "Lacks documentation, and most of the writing is anecdotal."

What is even worse for readers is that the reviewer accepts and reprints Kessler's basic charge, which is seriously flawed, namely that the average life insurance customer "must pay $1 to get 14 cents' worth" of benefit. Kessler derived that number by comparing a year's premium intake with the same year's benefit outlay, but the comparison is meaningless because life insurance typically pays off many years after the initial purchase (and don't we all prefer it that way?).

WALTER BUSSEWITZ
Manager, Media Information
American Council of Life Insurance
Washington, D.C.

Re: Philip Stern's "What's Wrong With Life Insurance?". The giant mutual life insurance companies are really answering to no one—policy holder, government, nor God. They talk of free enterprise as if they invented it, yet in reality are socialist citadels. Good living extends to all except the home office grunts who haven't been invited to the sales conventions. Their proper place is as a Department of Health and Human Services division, with their assets a part of the U.S. Treasury and their collective managers office right down the hall in the Social Security Administration. Federal bureaucratic management could not be any worse than they probably have now.

JACK E. FERGUSON
Sacramento, California

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Published monthly except combined July/August issue by The Washington Monthly Company, 1711 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 462-0128.

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ISSN 0043-0633.
Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $30; two years, $56; three years, $77. Additional charges per year, foreign subscriptions: Canada, $3; other, $25 air mail, $3 surface mail. Back issues, $3. Send all remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to 1711 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009. For change of address, please provide four weeks' notice and return old address label. New subscriptions only: 1-800-341-1522. Postmaster: Send form 3579 to The Washington Monthly, 1711 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.
The Washington Monthly is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature; the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106.
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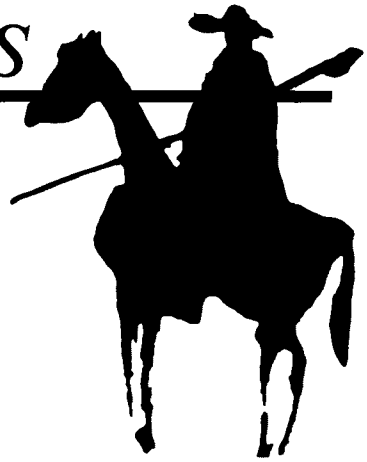
TILTING AT WINDMILLS



A White House stenographer named Killian Swift was fired, because he was a "security risk." He was a security risk because he was gay. Sounds tough but reasonable, doesn't it? After all, gays are subject to blackmail. But Swift is openly gay. He doesn't hide it from anyone. How then is he subject to blackmail? How then is he a security risk?....

In case you haven't heard, about one-and-one-half million people will have to refile their tax returns this year—not because they did something wrong but because the IRS can't get its computer to work. "There are some cases where the data was erased accidentally," says an IRS spokesman. "We still have the actual paper documents but they would be too time-consuming to find, so we'll ask for the duplicates." Too time-consuming for the IRS to find but not too time-consuming for the taxpayer to refile. This is President Reagan's IRS, not Jimmy Carter's. The man who was supposed to get government off our backs has not only increased the size of the federal government—there are more government employees today than when he took office—but he has also presided over the rapid decline into ineptitude of the agency that can do the most to drive the average citizen around the bend. Think, for example, of the hundreds of thousands of threatening notices that were mistakenly sent to innocent taxpayers recently. And consider the fact that the IRS was once one of the most—if not *the* most—competent of government agencies.

Here, as with the inefficiency with which his Pentagon has been spending our tax dollars, Reagan's problem is laziness. He will simply not do the hard work needed to understand and overcome bureaucratic error even in areas like defense spending and tax administration where it is critically important for the government to work well....

Avenue is a magazine aimed at the elite of New York's East Side, or as its editor, Judith Price, told *The New York Times*, at "people like us." A recent article about the groups banding together to share houses in the Hamptons said:

"One is tempted to dismiss the whole gobbling group of them as so many outer-borough legal secretaries and accountants. But this would be wrong. Nice girls and guys do it too."

Mrs. Price also publishes another magazine called *On The Avenue* aimed at upwardly mobile young professionals. "These people," she told the *Times*, "are trying very hard. They're visiting the great chefs of Europe, they're buying lingerie at Samantha Jones, they're shopping at Gristedes."...

The June issue of *Mother Jones* represents a landmark in the history of the left after it became deeply involved in the anti-war movement in the mid-sixties. At that time, the left turned from supporting a military draft to opposing it.

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The opposition was not muted but vehement.

During the early seventies this magazine began to argue that the draft could have brought the war to a quicker conclusion if it had been democratic and taken the sons of the influential along with those of the poor. By the time we printed "Draft the Rich" in April 1979, a number of other liberals were on our side. But they definitely did not include what might be called the left of the left, represented by magazines like *Mother Jones* and the *Nation*, and writers like *Rolling Stone*'s William Greider.

Now in its June 1985 issue, *Mother Jones* has, I'm delighted to report, published a highly persuasive essay by Pete Hamill called "Let's Draft the Yuppies." Hamill says "safe, soft, well-paid American white men watch television and growl about the need to invade Nicaragua.

"I don't think these armchair nationalists would be so brave if their own kids were obligated to do the fighting in Nicaragua."

Hamill goes on to make the other key point about a fair draft: that it would be a force for democracy and bringing us together if "all Americans, male and female, rich, middle-class, and poor from age 18 to 25 were subject to the draft:

"There are many Americans who never met black people until they walked into a basic training camp. There are many blacks who had not intimately encountered whites until they met them in foxholes. Some even became friends; none were ever the same again in their perceptions of race and class."

I saw that very thing happen in the orthopedic ward at the Fort McClellan Regional Hospital in 1945. In the rear section of the ward, there were four beds, two on each side of the center aisle. A Navy pilot from California and I were on one side. A white farmer from Alabama and a black farmer from Mississippi were on the other. We all liked to laugh. We were the despair of the nurses and the orderlies because we were never quiet when we were supposed to be. We liked one another. We became friends....

Have you noticed the inconsistency of the administration's positions on Nicaragua and South Africa? It says cutting off trade with South Africa would be bad because it would hurt the people, not the government. With Nicaragua, on the other hand, it argues that an embargo will not hurt the people but will bring down the government....

My basic point of view about Latin America is despair. The right is composed of oligarchs who feel nothing but contempt for the masses. The left is largely Marxist. The center is composed of people whose main purpose in life is to avoid incurring the wrath of—and possibly being shot by—the right or the left. It is true that in each country one does find people who truly believe in democracy and freedom. But they are a handful at most.

What this means is that there is no sizable group in any of these countries that is so clearly virtuous that it merits the risk of American lives in its support. Certainly, we should use all diplomatic means to prevent them from killing one another, but there should be no military intervention unless they do something that threatens us militarily. And by that I mean something like the installation of Russian missiles in Cuba in 1962....

In the annals of official travel for questionable purposes, the Paris Air Show has been the occasion for some of the most dubious trips of all. This year was no exception. The Department of Health and Human Services sent a delegation of eight to the Air Show. What was the justification? HHS had a booth to demonstrate how space age technology benefits the handicapped. Three staff members manned the booth. And Margaret Heckler and her party of four flew to Paris to open it....

There are, of course, many possible reasons why Norman Podhoretz lost his mind. But the one that seems most likely to me is that he read one too many headlines like this: "Schools Order Ethnic, Sex Balance on Scholar Teams." This actually appeared over a recent story in *The Los Angeles Times* that began:

"The Los Angeles Unified School District has ordered coaches of high school academic decathlon teams to see to it that these squads "reflect the sex and ethnic makeup of the student body."

The director of the senior

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high division said:

"I'm going to conduct a visual review on the day of the competition and teams which don't comply will not be permitted to compete."...

If the IRS is a once-great agency that has fallen on bad times, the FAA is an agency that has been consistently terrible for years. Two recent rulings explain why it is held in such low regard. First, without holding any public hearings or doing any new testing, the FAA is allowing the airlines to seal off two of the ten exit doors from the 747. This creates a 75 foot distance between the nearest exit doors.

"That's just too far to go when there's smoke, fire, gas, and panic," Matthew Finucane of the Flight Attendants Association told CBS News. "They're just not going to be able to get out."

The second FAA decision has to do with escape lights that the FAA will require the airlines to install by November 1986. These lights are needed to help passengers find exit doors when the aircraft cabins are filled with smoke as was the Air Canada DC 9 that crashed in Cinncinnati in 1983. While, according to *The Washington Post*, tests show the best lighting is provided by a system of incandescent lights placed under the seats on both sides of the aisle, the FAA is permitting the airlines to get by with installing spotlights over the exits even though tests show these lights won't work because they can't be seen in smoke.

I recently asked a former employee of the Federal Aviation Administration why it had such a miserable record on airline safety. Why did it always seem to cave in to industry? "Because," my friend said, "the guy from industry wears a $400 suit and eats at the Metropolitan Club so the FAA employee figures he must be right. Besides, there is an assumption that if the FAA and industry agree, they must be right. The only trouble is that there's no one there representing the public."...

Recently the *Dallas Times-Herald* ran an editorial criticizing the administration for dragging its feet on acid rain. Lee Thomas, the EPA administrator, set the *Times-Herald* straight with this letter:

"What you call the procrastination of the last four years has actually been a calculated strategy to acquire more information so that we can resolve the remaining uncertainties and get on with the design of a workable control program."...

My newest heroes are six firemen from Baltimore who have fought through the courts to keep that city from forcing them to retire at age 55. They feel, according to their attorney, "If we're physically fit and have our mental faculties, why shouldn't we be permitted to do the job?" Of course, they are right. And at a time when too many public employees try to justify early retirement—for many city fire and police departments, retirement, modeled on the military, comes in the early 40's—it is heartening to hear these firemen argue for a standard of "can we do the work?" This should, in my view, be the standard in all pre-65 retirement cases. If the person can't continue to work, he should be permitted to retire. If he can work, he should continue to work....

In the unfolding story of John A. Walker Jr., the accused Soviet spy, there was this morsel. Stephen Engelberg of *The New York Times* dug up an old friend of Walker's named Bill Wilkinson and interviewed him. Wilkinson had served with Walker aboard a nuclear submarine and had also once been the Imperial Wizard of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Speaking about Walker, Wilkinson said, "I felt like he was a patriot. I remember cussing commies with him."...

Back in 1981, when anti-nuclear chic was at its height, I wrote here about my fear that it was a fad that would soon pass. I'm sorry to say that time seems to have confirmed my view. But there are some notable exceptions. One is my friend, Harold Willens, who continues to bombard me, my fellow editors, and his fellow businessmen with propaganda for a nuclear freeze. I wish more people would stick by their guns as Harold has and not be ruled by the intellectual fashion of the day....

Good news from Africa. Glen Frankel of *The Washington Post* reports that socialism is on the decline. When I was travelling through Africa for the Peace

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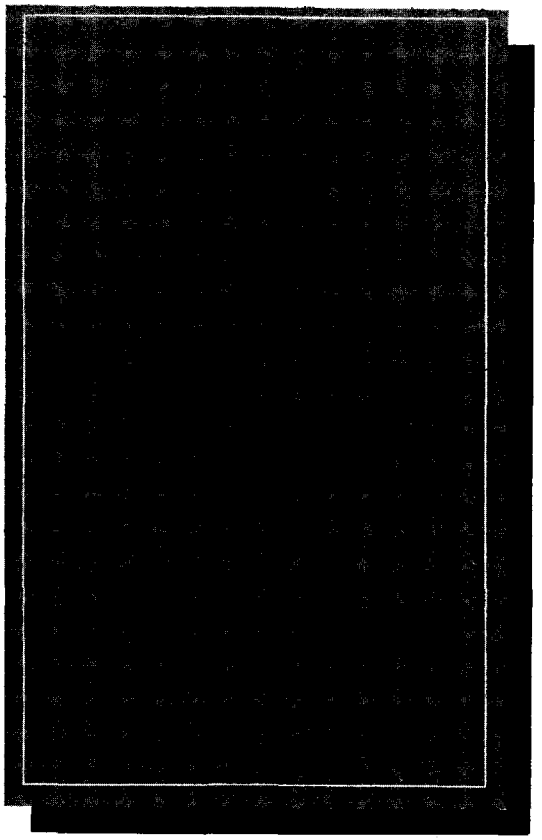
Corps in the 1960s, one of the most striking facts about the educated elites in the former British colonies I visited in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya was their unquestioning acceptance of socialism and their scorn for entrepreneurship. This was especially distressing because among the men and women of such tribes as the Ibo, the Ashanti, and the Kikuyu, there was often a lively spirit of enterprise and talent for it. But instead of building upon these aptitudes, Africa went largely for socialism in the 1970s. The resulting economic wreckage has been dismaying. *The Wall Street Journal* recently published an article by Keith Marsden of the World Bank dramatically contrasting the prosperity of East Asia with the poverty of Africa. In 1962 the per capita incomes of South Korea and Ghana were the same. Today the South Korean is five times greater....

A few issues back, Deborah Baldwin discussed in these pages the need for more part-time jobs to enable parents to spend more time at home with their preschool children. Now comes news from Jane Bryant Quinn, the financial columnist, that "opportunities are getting better for workers who want to put in less time than 40 hours a week." One example cited by Quinn was the teachers of Jefferson County, Colorado, who won a job-sharing program under which two teachers share a single job, each of them working half a day for half pay....

School administration—public and private—is a nightmare of featherbedding and waste. Recently, for example, when Robert L. Green, president of the University of the District of Columbia went to Atlanta to attend a conference, he was not satisfied with an ordinary hotel or an ordinary hotel room. He stayed at the Ritz-Carleton, and he stayed in a suite. The suite consisted, according to the *Washington Post*, of "a large living room, a separate bedroom, brass sinks and mirrors, one-and-a-half baths, a wet bar, and a lot of closet space. Green has, according to the *Washington Times*, spent $25,000 of the University's money on travel, consisting of 32 separate trips since he took office in 1983....

A recent column by my friend, Don Marsh, in the *Charleston Gazette*, reminded me of a custom that used to prevail in the coal towns of West Virginia. Instead of paying the miners money, the coal companies would give



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them scrip. Scrip was private money minted by the coal company. It could only be used in company stores where goods were ordinarily overpriced. I remember as a child being charged ten cents for a package of chewing gum that was otherwise universally available for a nickel. The markup on other items wasn't quite that bad but it almost was—about 30 percent, according to Marsh. This serfdom endured throughout most of the first half of this century. . . .

It was December 1963. I was sitting in my office at the Peace Corps still numb from the shock of the Kennedy assassination. My intercom rang and I was told a Mr. Kempton was on the phone. It was Murray Kempton, who was then in Washington working for *The New Republic*. His wife was a colleague of mine at the Peace Corps and had told him that I knew Bill Moyers. Bill had suddenly lept to great prominence as LBJ's closest aide and Murray was planning to do a story about him. Murray invited me to lunch. I said I would be delighted.

That understated the case considerably. While I was studying and working in New York during the late forties and early fifties, Murray, who was then writing for the *New York Post*, had been my idol. He was unique among the journalists of that time. Some could report what they could see and hear; they were the news reporters. Some could write about what they thought; their words appeared on or near the editorial page. Others would describe what they sensed and felt; they were called feature writers. Murray could do all these things. He also did them with wit and literary distinction. For anyone who cared about journalism in the 1950s, he was a beacon of hope. That is why I'm glad they gave him a Pulitzer this year. It's 30 years too late, but that's the way of the world, isn't it?. . .

"Eight went bad, one went straight." The speaker was Earl Moore, a 17-year-old black who lives in one of the toughest sections of Washington's ghetto. Earl is a basketball player and will be going to George Mason University on a basketball scholarship this fall. He was telling Patricia Gaines-Carter of *The Washington Post* about the friends with whom he had grown up.

What fascinates me about this story is that Earl Moore knew he would have a fair chance in life because he has athletic ability. His friends look around and they don't see that evidence. The sad fact is that sports like basketball, football, and track are the only areas of our national life where blacks know the deck is not stacked against them.

But there's another side to Moore's story. When he was asked about what made his life different from the lives of most of his buddies:

"It comes down to your parents."

In Earl's case that meant his mother, Mary, who says:

"I don't think those kids have enough exposure to love. They need someone to hug them."

But to Mary Moore, love doesn't mean indulgence. She believes in "spare the rod and spoil the child":

"You either respect me and my rules, or you don't stay in my house."

To provide for her children, Mary Moore worked at two jobs for almost 20 years. From 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., she was a domestic. "Then," she told Gaines-Carter, "I came home and cooked dinner." After dinner, she traveled to Silver Spring, where she spent six hours cleaning an office building. . . .

"Alcohol Abuse on Boats Rises" read the headline in the May 26 *New York Times*. Boat owners, the article made clear, are perfectly free to drive their boats while drunk. There is a federal law forbidding the practice, but no regulations have been issued to implement it. The Coast Guard, which is supposed to do the enforcing, is widely believed to be incapable of policing the 13 million boats in operation. Of the 1,240 people who died in boating accidents last year, the *Times* says, "more than half the deaths can be traced to alcohol." A similar problem exists with private planes. At most airports there is nothing to prevent a private pilot who is drunk from getting into his plane and taking off. . . .

Have you heard about drunken-driver bumper stickers? They solve a problem often confronted by judges in drunk driving cases: taking away the offender's license will deprive him of his only way of getting to work. This frequently causes

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judges not to punish offenders as severely as they should. But Judge Becky Titus of Sarasota, Florida is offering first offenders a choice of having their license suspended for a year, or, if they need the car to get to school or work, of placing a bumper sticker advising the public and police that they have been convicted of drunk driving. I like the idea....

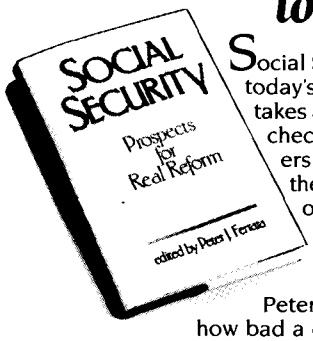
A friend just called to my attention a vote in the United Nations that took place one week after the disaster in Bhopal, India. The issue was whether to continue to publish an international directory of dangerous pesticides and other chemicals. The vote was 147 to 1 in favor of continued publication. The one negative vote was cast by the United States. Our delegate explained that President Reagan felt the directory's $89,000 cost was "wasteful." I wonder how much was spent on Margaret Heckler's booth at the Paris Air Show and the air travel to and from by HHS employees?....

Reagan's tax reform program should be applauded for its movement toward simplicity and for the relief it gives the poor. It also contains the beginning of a sensible federal policy toward the aged. It does away with the extra tax exemption that went to the elderly without regard to need and replaces it with a tax credit that is based on need. But I see no reason to lower the maximum rate to 35 percent. I believe the rich should pay higher taxes. They get more from this country than the rest of us. The proposed reduction strikes me as another case of bribing the rich to support reform. A top rate of 50 percent on income in excess of $100,000 strikes me as fair and reasonable. I don't think people who want to make money are going to be deterred because they only get to keep 50 cents of every dollar they make above that amount. After all, we had boom times in the forties, fifties, and sixties with much higher rates....

The graduate school's admissions committee was meeting. "We have enough of them." "You have to admit, there are a lot," said another. Was this 50 years ago and was the "them" Jews? No, it was just two years ago, and the group was Asian-Americans. The school was not some backwater of bigotry, but Princeton. The meeting was described in a recent article in *The New York Times* that explored prejudice against Asian-Americans by Ivy League admissions directors. The problem is that the Asian-Americans, like the Jews before them, are on the whole more ambitious and better students than those competing with them for admission. This should not be a problem. It is a gift to the nation of the kind of new blood that has been its salvation from the beginning. Don't keep them out. Let them in....

—*Charles Peters*

The Baby Boomers' Answer to Social Security?



Social Security is an increasingly bad deal for today's young workers. The payroll tax today takes a greater bite out of most workers' paychecks than the income tax, yet many workers will get less out of the system than they put into it. Polls show that 75 percent of young people don't trust Social Security to provide for their retirement, a fact reflected in the millions of new IRAs opened every year. In this book Peter Ferrara and other authors show just how bad a deal Social Security is and how much more a private retirement system could offer. Ferrara proposes a fundamental reform: a Super IRA that would guarantee today's elderly the benefits they are expecting, while giving young workers the option to choose a secure, private plan.

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Why We Can't Catch

As intelligence officials picked through the evidence of the Walker spy ring, there was disagreement over the extent of the damage. On one point, however, agreement was widespread: the system for keeping alleged spies such as John Walker Jr. and his accomplices away from the nation's defense secrets is alarmingly weak.

This was not a case of Russians breaking into locked file drawers with hacksaws. The three principals in the case—Walker, his brother, Arthur, and James Whitworth—all had received "top secret" clearances to view information like that in question. John's son, Michael, who was also involved, held a "secret" level clearance. The Walker case is just one of many in recent years in which individuals fully certified by the federal government for access to sensitive defense data, have been caught selling that information to the Soviets.

The clearance process is supposed to weed out such spies. But as is by now amply clear, the process is breaking down, primarily for one reason: "Numbers are overwhelming the whole system," says Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia. Specifically:

- Too much paper in the federal government is being classified as containing "national security secrets."
- Too many federal employees are getting clearances to handle all this paper.
- As a result, the government is spending too much time investigating people before they are hired and not enough time doing periodic checks of people already on the job and actually handling sensitive material.

Imagine trying to do a background investigation on every resident of the city of Chicago; throw in Boston and San Francisco for good measure, and you have some idea of the magnitude of the problem. Making matters worse, the quality of the staff conducting these clearance investigations has diminished in recent years; for this and other reasons, clearance checks are not as thorough as they should be.

As the national media seized upon the Walker case, officials all over Washington were bemoaning the security breakdown. Senator David Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, expressed the view of a number of his collegues when he called upon the Reagan administration to "cut in half the amount of information we classify and cut by more than half the number of people who have access to it." Even the Reagan administration has conceded that there might be a problem.

There has been much less discussion, however, of how the clearance process came to be so overloaded. A tendency to push for too much classified paper and too many clearances is virtually built into the federal bureaucracy. Unless official Washington comes to grips with these measures, its stern resolutions about cutting the number of clearances will amount to so much hot air. The record of the Reagan administration has not been encouraging. Far from resisting the bureaucracy's inclination to excess, the Reagan administration has reinforced it.

Too many cooks

The first problem with the clearance system is that it is so diffuse. Thousands of officials scattered throughout the federal government decide what documents need to be classified as defense secrets, and thousands of others decide who needs to be cleared for access to this paper. The Defense Investigative Service of the Department of Defense conducts most of the security investigations, since most of the clearances are issued by that department. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) handles clearances for the civilian agencies, primarily the Department of Energy, which does nuclear-related work. The FBI takes care of high-level political appointees, White House staff, and selected employees of the federal courts and congressional committees. The Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the State Department, the Secret Service, and several other agencies do their own security clearances.

William McGowan is an editor of The Washington Monthly. *Jackie Conciatore assisted with research for this article.*

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to the first two years of Reagan's.

Just as bigger Pentagon budgets and fancier "gold-plated" weapons don't necessarily provide better defense, more classified information doesn't automatically improve our national security. In fact, the opposite can result. For one thing, classifying so many documents can cheapen the designation. "Everything can't be that secret, so people treat nothing as secret," Senator Durenberger observed. Another result is the need for more clearances for the employees who handle classified information. It's reached the point where even Pentagon officials seem to draw a distinction between processing clearances and guarding the national security. "With all these applications, we now seem to be in the business of clearing people, not of finding potential security risks," one such official told *The New York Times*.

Clear 'em all

If all the people getting security clearances really needed them, we'd just have to live with it. But Steven Garfinkel, head of the ISOO, acknowledged in a recent statement to the Senate Government Operations Committee that "the number of national security clearances among executive branch employees far exceeds the number of employees who require access to classified information to do their jobs." An example: in 1980, the Air Force conducted an audit of 11 units of its weapons development and testing bureaucracy and found that all of the personnel surveyed had top secret or sensitive compartmented information clearances, when only 50 percent actually needed them.

Hyper-classification of documents is not the only reason for such excesses. In the federal bureaucracy, clearances have a significance quite apart from the security function they are supposed to serve. For one thing, they become a vehicle of bureaucratic advancment. If you are a federal employee in a defense-related agency, you realize that your spectrum of potential promotions is wider if you are eligible for jobs that are classified. The natural inclination is to press for the maximum clearance you can get. If you are a supervisor, you want the largest possible pool of promotable subordinates from which to choose. Thus, your incentive is to clear everyone to the highest possible level, even if some jobs do not involve handling sensitive material.

Often, clearances are based not on what an employee actually does but on job descriptions, which in government are notoriously inflated. Even attorneys at the Department of Education were required to have full background investigations, until two of them challenged this rule successfully last year. Sometimes, it's a simple question of status and feeling important. Stansfield Turner, who headed the CIA in the Carter administration, tried to freeze the number of clearances in his agency, "but the pressure became so intense that after three years I had to relax it," he said recently. "In many cases people kept their clearances just as a matter of prestige."

The biggest abusers may be the defense contractors, whose top secret clearances—the kind that require full field investigations—have tripled in recent years. Burgeoning high-tech weapons research accounts for some of that increase, but much of it is plainly excess. One Pentagon study cited the finding by a private survey of 2,360 contractor employees with top secret clearances that more than half had had no contact whatsoever with classified information in the preceding 18 months. The study estimated that probably "no more than 35,000 to 40,000 of the 115,000 contractor personnel cleared at the top secret level have ever had access to top secret information."

Like the bureaucrats, the private contractors can use the clearance process to angle for advantage. "It's in their interests to get as many people cleared and to keep them cleared whether they now have classified contracts or not," says Britt Snider. "If they plan to compete for contracts in the future, it puts them in a better position." The Defense Investigative Service is supposed to screen these requests from contractors for clearance investigations, but it generally rubber-

There is a big pressure for security investigators to produce and to show that they've handled so many cases in a certain period of time. . . a tendency to avoid troubling information rather than to seek it out.

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The promotion tracks at the clearance agencies encourage the best people to get out of investigative work rather than to strive to do their jobs better.

stamps them for lack of time and staff. The government ends up expending time and money clearing people to sit around waiting for contracts that may never arrive.

Complicating matters further are the "multiple clearances" required when contractors do work for different agencies. Clearances are supposed to be reciprocal, but the agencies don't always accept fully the investigations done by someone else. "You wind up doing separate paperwork for the same people," says Larry Howe, a corporate security official with Science Applications International Corporation, a California defense contractor. "The reigning attitude is 'No one can do it as well as we can. We'll do it ourselves.' "

Hear no evil

All of these requests for clearances end up on the shoulders of investigators who have more work than they can handle.

Out of necessity, the whole system stresses quantity over quality. "There's a big pressure for agents to produce and for their supervisors to show that they've turned out so much work in such a period of time," explains Britt Snider. By some accounts, there is a tendency to avoid troubling information rather than to seek it out. "I had agents who used to go in and say to interviewees, 'You don't know anything bad about so-and-so, do you?' " says one former OPM investigator. A former case supervisor recalls, "Sometimes we'd get stuff back from investigators with so many holes in it that we'd want to send it back. But with managers on our backs to keep things moving and the delays involved, we had to decide whether to send the case back and wait another six months for it to be redone or simply pass it on. Most of the time we passed it on."

This "crank 'em out" attitude helps explain why last year the Pentagon denied or revoked only about 1 percent of the number of clearances it issued—fewer than 11,000 out of 895,000. For the civilian agencies, the rejection rate has been even lower, about .01 percent from 1980 to 1984. Not an awfully impressive record, even assuming that the mere existence of the clearance process prevents some undesirables from applying. "I can't believe that that's showing enough care," said Senator Patrick Leahy, ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

To be sure, clearance overload is not the only obstacle facing the investigators. An increasing number of engineers and other high-tech experts working for defense contractors are immigrants whose backgrounds are difficult if not impossible to check. On top of that, many states deny the Defense Department access to data on criminal arrests (as opposed to convictions), and no federal law requires the states to provide this information. Similar problems arise in checking employees' financial status—especially troubling in light of the increasing amounts the formerly niggardly Soviets are now paying for stolen military information. "It used to be if you got five grand out of the Soviets, you were doing well," a CIA official recently told columnist Jack Anderson. "Now they're giving out 20, 30, 50 and even 75 thousand dollars like it's nothing." Bank accounts are off limits, unless the applicant signs a waiver (which generally is not required). "You wind up giving more information on your private finances to a bank officer for a car loan than you do to the government for a clearance," says one former investigator.

The federal Privacy Act poses yet another problem. Intended to protect innocent citizens against smears on their character, it has the side effect of impeding the collection of information on possible spies. The Act entitles the subject of a federal clearance investigation to see a copy of his file, including the statements of all the people who were interviewed. Investigators are required to warn sources that their statements may be revealed under the Act in this manner. Technically, a source can request confidentiality, and investigators can grant it on the spot. But people are understandably wary. In some cases, files have been put together so carelessly that confidential sources were exposed.

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One federal judge said that he didn't know of a single colleague on the federal bench who would provide uncomplimentary information regarding an applicant for federal employment. Former employers are reluctant to provide anything beyond a simple confirmation of employment. (The problem is not confined to security clearances; fearing lawsuits, former employers have become tight-lipped on employment references as well.)

Investigators are worried about lawsuits, too. A 1980 federal case set a precedent that they can be held personally liable for damages if they exceed the bounds of their authority. Even though such lawsuits rarely succeed, investigators fear they will be the exception to the rule and lose their shirts in the process. "There is a perception in the field that investigators can't do much," says a Senate staff counsel familiar with the issue. "They can, but not knowing the letter of the law, they are needlessly restrained by fear."

"What it all means is that we catch as catch can," says George Woloshyn, director of investigations for OPM. "We usually get the information we need, but there are gaps, significant gaps, and we know it and somebody who's trying to evade our process knows it."

While the job has been getting harder, the agencies have been downgrading the status of the people who do it. At the OPM, for example, investigators now start at the GS-5 level—which pays about $12,500 per year—down from the GS-7 level in the fifties. Almost all investigators used to be college graduates; many were lawyers. Today investigators don't even need a B.A. If the agencies aggressively sought people with talent, degrees would be superfluous, but a 1983 survey of investigators in the Defense Investigative Service showed that 40 percent of those polled judged the caliber of new recruits in their organization to be "extremely low." "There's been a general diminution of ability," confirms one 30-year OPM veteran, now retired. "There are only a small number who can conceptualize what they are supposed to be doing. Only a few who can develop information, recognize the significance and know what to do with it."

The promotion tracks at the clearance agencies, moreover, encourage the best people to get out of investigative work rather than to strive to do their jobs better. The top grade level for investigators is only GS-11. To move any higher, you have to go into management. "This lessens the sense of importance and meaning that investigators in the field tend to feel," says one retired OPM investigator. "They see their job as secondary in the overall scheme." To make matters worse, investigators climb the ladder more by meeting quotas than by doing a thorough job. "In the old days, when there was a career interest in investigations," says the 30-year veteran, "they were more conscientious."

Patriotic traitors

Mounting backlogs and cursory investigations are two results of an overloaded security clearance system. A third, and most grievous of all, is the dramatic cutback in periodic updates that ensure that individuals already cleared are still worthy of trust. We are neglecting maintenance in order to keep the system running.

Most traitors today are not Soviet sympathizers along the lines of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in 1953 for passing secrets related to the atom bomb. Motives tend to be personal rather than ideological.

"I don't know of a single [espionage] case in the last 15 years where ideology had a role at all," Bobby Ray Inman, former deputy director of the CIA, said recently on "Face the Nation." Sometimes it's a yen for excitement, a desire to play James Bond. More often, it's the profit motive. "We don't see ideological motives," Bill Baker, an FBI spokesman, says of the Walker case. "All we see is cash."

Take William Holden Bell, an employee at

The government is supposed to reinvestigate each high level clearance every five years. In practice, the Defense Department concedes, it's more like once every 17 years.

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Hughes aircraft who was convicted of espionage in 1981. Bell had lost a son, gone through a divorce and remarriage, and was deeply in debt. He was recruited by a Polish intelligence agent who, it was reported, reminded him of his son; he wound up passing along classified weapons data for two years. Another example is the recent case of James Cavenaugh, a technician at Northrup Aircraft who had a secret-level clearance to work on the Stealth bomber. Cavenaugh was in line for a promotion to a job that required a top secret clearance, and, being deeply in debt, he feared that he wouldn't qualify. His solution was to try to sell classified information to Soviet spies, who it turned out, were undercover FBI agents.

Security risks like these usually develop in the course of the individual's career. They don't show up, like membership in the Communist party, through examination of an individual's past. Thus the original background check, while still necessary, is of limited use. Accordingly, the government is supposed to reinvestigate each top secret and sensitive compartmented information clearance every five years. In practice, the Defense Department concedes, it's more like once every 17 years. The system is so bogged down that from 1981 to 1983, the Defense Investigative Service had to put all reinvestigations on a complete hold.

Even when the government does reinvestigate these days, it's generally a quick national agency check of criminal and other records, without a thorough examination in the field. Given these difficulties it should come as no surprise that people with lower-level, secret clearances are not being reinvestigated at all. In defense plants, a great deal of sensitive information is classified as "secret," making the casualness of the clearance process at that level especially worrisome.

The Walker case is a pointed illustration of the dangers of neglecting reinvestigations. By most accounts, John Walker Jr. was a political conservative who had even done organizing for the Ku Klux Klan. His former wife told the *Los Angeles Times* that he started spying because he needed money for a failing restaurant in which he had invested. Walker had received his top secret clearance in 1965 and held it until he retired from the Navy in 1976. Allegedly, he had been spying for the Soviets for most of those years, but had never been reexamined. His brother, Arthur, also had a top secret clearance that had never been reinvestigated.

The Walker case is not the only example of espionage in recent years that might have been prevented by more diligent reexaminations. Another is the case of Ruby Schuler, an executive secretary at a Silicon Valley defense contractor, who stole documents relating to the Minuteman missile and the ICBM. Schuler's husband, a freelance engineer named James Harper, sold these documents to Polish intelligence agents for upwards of $250,000. Schuler's secret clearance had never been reinvestigated, even though she was known to associates as an alcoholic who often carried a flask of vodka in her purse.

Spies like these are an even greater threat to our country than the old kind were. Gene R. LaRocque, a retired admiral, points out, that while there aren't that many Trotskyites running loose, "the people who want a little more cash are legion." Yet, our federal clearance policies haven't kept up with this threat. Largely from the crush of work, the process dwells more upon what an individual was like ten years ago—ideologically or otherwise—than on what they are like today. "We are so busy looking for symptoms of bad character in someone's past behavior that we are prone to overlook the lonely guy in midlife crisis who could really hurt us," says Larry Howe, the industrial security specialist.

Recognizing this problem, the CIA and the other intelligence agencies have a policy of rigorous reexamination of their employees. "You have to worry about their change in motivation over time," says Stansfield Turner. "You have a guy who enters government service as a young man who is fine. But just because he was loyal 25 years ago when he joined doesn't mean he will be forever."

It seems straightforward enough. But the rigorous updating of clearances that is routine in the intelligence community is the exception rather than the rule. The other agencies aren't blind. They are overwhelmed by too many classified secrets and too many people with clearances.

A number of people in Washington are coming forward with solutions, some of which make sense. Sam Nunn has proposed that the government start to bill defense contractors for the cost of conducting clearances and that the president reward both contractors and government agencies that reduce their clearances by putting them at the front of the line for the ones they do request. These would be good initial steps. But the greater challenge is to eliminate, or at least reduce, the bureaucratic and personal pressures that produce too much classification, too many clearances, sloppy investigation, and too little reinvestigation. ■

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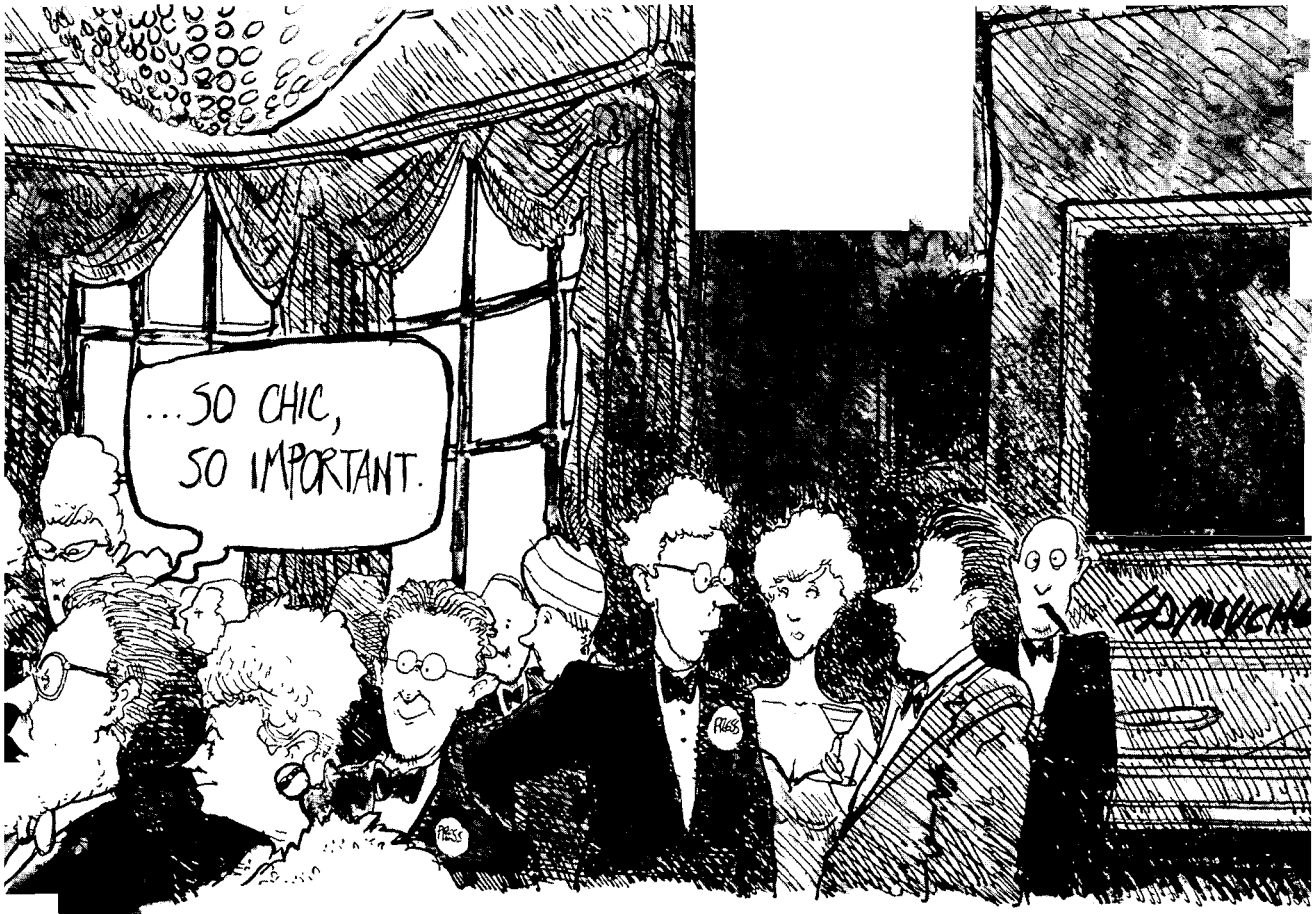

Reporters: The New Washington Elite

by Charlotte Hays and Jonathan Rowe

Thumbing through his engagement book, *Los Angeles Times* Bureau Chief Jack Nelson surveys an impressive array of entries—a gala affair for King Fahd, dinner at the Canadian Embassy, *U.S. News and World Report*'s party for retiring Editor Marvin Stone, cocktails for the Chinese ambassador, and several movie screenings. "Spring is the worst time of year," complains Nelson. "You could just look at your schedule and see that you had too much to do. There were about eight black-tie things."

Nelson is not unique. He represents a pervasive phenomenon on the Washington scene: the Socialite Journalist. Washington editors, and even reporters, enjoy a status that would shock their counterparts in Cleveland or Chicago; no party today is complete without its representatives from the media. "When we're putting together a guest list," says Betsey Weltner, a publicist with Gray and Company, the public relations firm, "including a journalist is just as important as including a diplomat or a Cabinet member."

"We invite jobs, not people as individuals," admits Sandra Gottlieb, the socially savvy wife of

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the Canadian ambassador. Asked for a list of status positions, Mrs. Gottlieb ticks off the editor of *The Washington Post*, a Supreme Court Justice, the bureau chief of the *Los Angeles Times*, and a vague category called "opinion makers."

Ambassador and Mrs. Gottlieb frequently entertain Meg Greenfield, the Joseph Krafts, the Tom Bradens, the James Restons, and Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn. A writer and *Post* columnist herself, Mrs. Gottlieb also gives less official "smart lady lunches." *Women's Wear Daily*'s Susan Watters, Abigail McCarthy, Barbara Matusow (Mrs. Jack Nelson) and *Washington Weekly* Publisher Joan Bingham have been to smart lady lunches.

Journalists in Washington have become what bankers are in Pittsburgh or Tulsa: the straws that stir the drink. "Washington is fundamentally like Hollywood," says Richard Cohen, a *Post* columnist who is himself something of a "catch." "It doesn't make steel, and it doesn't make computers, and it doesn't deal in high finance." Washington makes news, and the life goal of the powerful here is that others think well of them. For this to occur, the press must think well of them first.

Ali Bengelloun, Ambassador of Morocco, recalled for the *Washington Journalism Review* how he stopped by *The Washington Post* to visit Executive Editor Ben Bradlee immediately after presenting his credentials to President Carter. "I consider Bradlee a personality who plays a big role in Washington," Bengelloun explained. And he added, "I consider it very important to have journalists to my home, just as I would want to meet a member of the Cabinet face to face." Tell that to a journalist often enough, and he'll start to believe it's true.

In a city where the elected powers come and go, the press has become a part of the permanent social establishment, valued for its store of lore and wisdom. More than one new senator or Cabinet secretary has huddled with a veteran pundit to find out how to deal with the Appropriations Committee chairman or where the bodies are buried at State. Journalists, for their part, scrutinize a new administration a little the way the denizens of Palm Beach size up the family that bought the mansion down the drive. In contrast to the permanent pillars of Washington journalism, says Mrs. Gottlieb, "a Mr. Secretary today is a Mr. Has-Been tomorrow."

Socializing with the Washington media becomes a priority even for the very highest. President Jimmy Carter, for example, showed up for the 1980 opening of the *L.A. Times*'s new bureau on I Street. Nelson, who knew Carter when he was a reporter with the *Atlanta Constitution*, sees nothing extraordinary about the president of the United States stopping by a newspaper party. "I don't see any reason why we shouldn't consider ourselves on equal footing with those we cover," he says.

All of this sounds a bit strange if you still think of journalists as the hard-boiled types who do most of their socializing in bars. It's equally curious to a journalist from another country. Christopher Hitchens, the British-born correspondent for *Nation* magazine, says, "If you said in London, 'You must come to dinner. I've got the features editor of the *Observer*,' everybody would laugh."

New Deal seduction

Asked to check her guest list, Polly Fritchey, wife of columnist Clayton Fritchey and one of Georgetown's leading hostesses, finds that about half of the people at her last party were journalists. Would the press have figured so prominently on such a guest list 20 years ago? "Oh, God, no!" exclaims Hugh Sidey, the columnist and Washington bureau chief emeritus of *Time*. "It amazes me even today."

When Sidey came to Washington during the Eisenhower years, the social life of reporters here—even the relatively privileged ones at *Time*—was far more modest than today. "We didn't make much money, and I lived in a small apartment on Pook's Hill with my wife and child," recalls Sidey, who wrote books on the weekend to help make ends meet. He donned white tie for the first time on his life for the second Eisenhower inaugural, but he was totally unfamiliar with the capital's social elite. "I whispered to somebody, 'Who's that very handsome woman,'" he recalls. "It was Mrs. Merriweather Post, but I didn't recognize her."

One day earlier this year, Sidey's upcoming social calendar included such events as a dinner at the F Street Club for Clare Booth Luce hosted by Henry Grunwald, the editor-in-chief of all Time, Inc. publications. Ronald Reagan was one of the invitees expected to attend. On another evening, Sidey was due at the Chevy Chase Club for a dinner in honor of Count von Stauffenberg.

As Sidey's experience indicates, the social debut of the Washington journalist is a fairly recent occurrence. A handful of lions, such as

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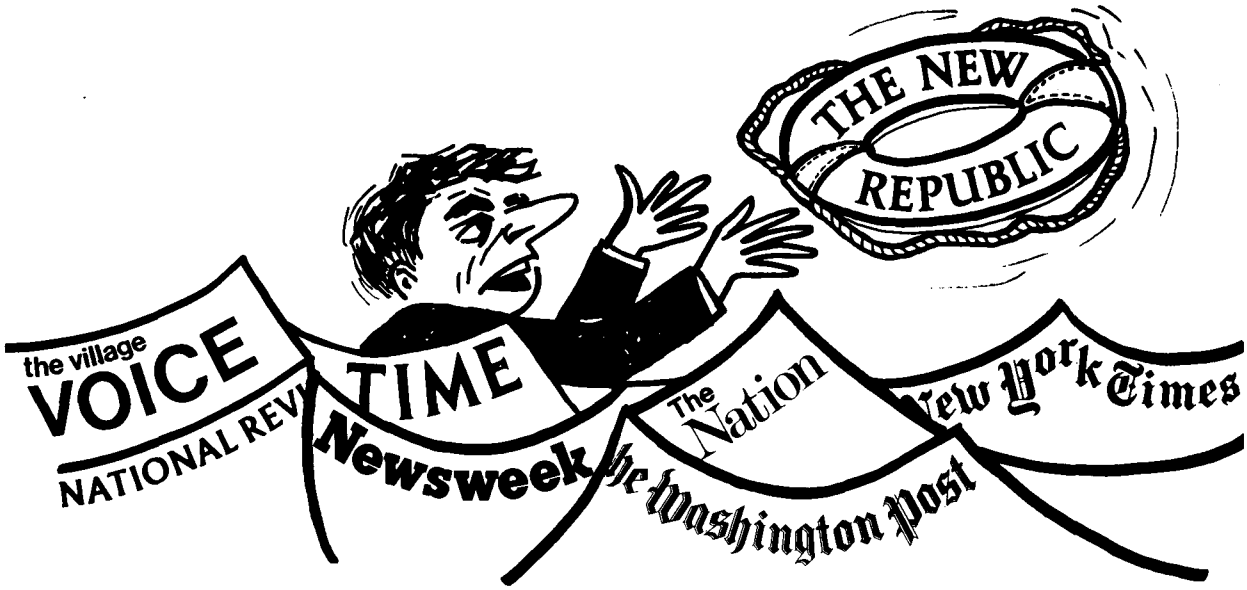

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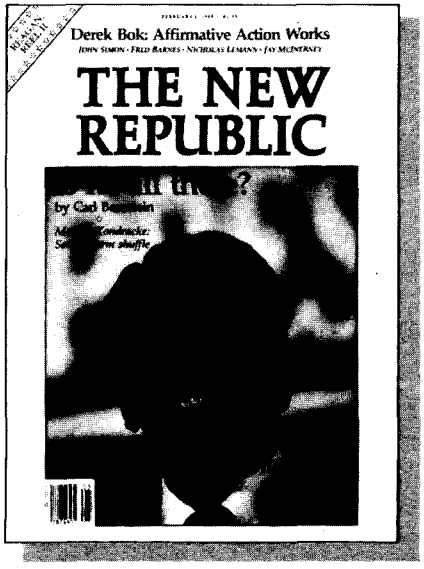

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Walter Lippmann, have always supped with Cabinet secretaries and ambassadors, but ordinary reporters and bureau chiefs, even for major publications, have traditionally been minor characters on the social scene.

In the late 19th century, Washington reporters were widely associated with rough-and-tumble congressional politics and influence peddling. Some correspondents supplemented their meager salaries by working as staff members for the same legislators they wrote about. The champion in this regard was probably one Uriah Painter, for 25 years a correspondent for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and described as "one of the few newspapermen in Washington who died wealthy." Painter played all the angles, coming out against bills so he could be bought off, as well as doing freelance lobbying on the side. One congressman of a progressive bent complained that within six months of their arrival in Washington, reporters could be found "eating out of every official hand between the White House and the Capitol."

Through the 1920s, Washington was a pretty sleepy place, ignored by the rest of the country and small enough for a single correspondent to cover. Presidents such as Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge didn't cause many late hours for the press corps here. Herbert Hoover, a man of greater talents, held himself aloof from journalists; fraternizing would have been beneath his dignity.

All that changed with the election of Roosevelt, who brought with him both intellectuals and action. Covering the important events of the New Deal, journalists became more important, too. Roosevelt understood, moreover, that the journalists could help make FDR.

The Depression was still the era of the tyrant publishers, men such as William Randolph Hearst, who presided over what critics of today's "liberal" media must think of as journalism's good old days. "The publishers didn't just disagree with the New Deal," wrote William Rivers, an historian of journalism. "They hated it." Roosevelt quickly concluded that to get favorable coverage, he would have to court the reporters—who often disagreed with their employers—the way his Republican predecessors had courted the publishers.

Before FDR, reporters had gone notebook-in-hand to White House social functions, hangers-on rather than participants. Roosevelt invited them as guests. He developed a sense of professional camaraderie with reporters, suggesting during interviews, "If I were writing that story. . . ." He also initiated the custom of the president's holding frequent press conferences, which gave reporters presidential quotes and kept FDR at the center of attention. Even Mrs. Roosevelt held press conferences—the first First Lady to do so. Mrs. Roosevelt's close friend, Lorena Hickock, was a journalist.

By extending reporters a measure of presidential solicitude, Roosevelt began their transformation from raffish operators to members of Mrs. Fritchey's guest list. According to Hope Ridings Miller, former editor of the *Post* society page, "Reporters have only been socially acceptable since the Roosevelts."

Redecorating with Jackie

Still, the press's position in Washington high society remained relatively minor through the late forties and fifties. Neither Truman nor Eisenhower felt at home with reporters, nor understood how they might be used to forward White House policy. And in the newsroom of the old *Washington Daily News*, says Tom Kelly, a reporter for the *News* in the fifties, staff members still socialized with cops rather than high-ranking bureaucrats or diplomats. "You drank beer and whiskey," says Kelly, "and if you'd come on about wine you'd have been laughed out of the room." Correspondents for major out-of-town newspapers had more standing than the reporters for the local tabloid, but they were still more at home in bars than in the parlors of Georgetown.

It wasn't until the emergence of John F. Kennedy, another glamorous, charming Democrat, that reporters resumed their upward march in status. And they were waiting for the call.

By the 1960s, many more reporters were college educated and from middle class backgrounds. Edward R. Murrow, meanwhile, had defined a new role—the reporter celebrity—with his World War II radio broadcasts from Europe. Through television, newsmen were gradually becoming as well known as the public officials they covered.

With his father's help, Kennedy had courted the press diligently from the very beginning of his political career. Long before he reached the White House, JFK came to appreciate the influence of publications such as *Time*, *Life*, and *Look*, which were then the predominant vehicles of national celebrity. Flattering photographic depictions of what appeared to be Kennedy's private life appeared frequently—and not by accident. When, for example, the dashing young

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senator took Jacqueline Bouvier to Hyannisport for the first time, a *Life* photographer happened to be lying in wait to record this spontaneous occasion for posterity. *Life* ran the pictures under the title "The Courtship of a U.S. Senator."

Like Roosevelt, Kennedy was well versed in the world of newsroom politics and deadlines. Also like Roosevelt, JFK charmed reporters with personal attention. One *New York Times* reporter said after the election that it was as though "one of us" had made it to the White House. On the eve of the inaugural, the person Kennedy chose to visit was Joseph Alsop, the columnist.

In contrast to FDR, Kennedy honored the press in public. The first president to hold regular televised news conferences, Kennedy showed an entire nation of viewers that he took reporters' questions seriously, that they were welcome participants in an exciting, renewed Washington.

The demise of Hearst and other autocratic, ideological publishers had given Washington editors and reporters an unprecedented amount of freedom. Major newspapers increasingly sought respectability through "objectivity." Publishers and owners saw themselves as stewards, concerned about turning a profit; the old-style conservative crusading was seen as undignified. In the 1930s, more than half of the Washington reporters responded in a poll that their stories had been "played down, cut, or killed for 'policy reasons.'" By 1962, less than 8 percent reported such problems.

Kennedy realized that, even more than in Roosevelt's time, the people to invite to dinner were no longer the publishers, but the reporters and editors who actually produced the news. And, as with his press conferences, Kennedy often entertained his journalist friends in front of a conveniently positioned camera. In his admiring account of the Kennedy presidency, entitled (suggestively in this context) *Conversations With Kennedy*, Ben Bradlee recounted numerous intimate family dinners at the White House. This was Bradlee the *Newsweek* bureau chief before his jump up to the *Post* editorship.

"Kennedy swept us into a world we'd never seen before," Hugh Sidey reminisces. "Suddenly here you were at Hickory Hill with the 'beautiful people' you'd only read about. You were on the Honey Fitz, or taking a nude swim with the president of the United States. Or Jacqueline Kennedy called you about a story on redecorating the White House. That's the stuff novels are written about. Kennedy brought us onto the magic carpet with him."

Camelot passed, but the prominence of reporters continued to increase. When a distraught Jackie Kennedy needed support in the hours just before her husband's death, she called on two trusted friends: Ben Bradlee and his first wife, Toni. Theodore White captured that scene in a widely read article for *Life*, reminding Washington of where journalists stood in society.

If Kennedy, following Roosevelt's example, conferred new power on reporters, Ralph Nader demonstrated the extent of that power. Working not from the White House, but from rag-tag offices and even pay phones, Nader used the Washington press corps to build a movement. With late-night telephone sessions and dead-eye news tips, Nader sold consumerism to the reporters. They sold it to the country, giving Nader's Capitol Hill appearances lavish coverage and making his young "Raiders" well-known Washington characters. Journalists became fellow crusaders; no longer just scribes for the first draft of history, they were becoming protagonists in their own right. When Nader began appearing in newsmagazine surveys as one of the ten "most influential" people in America, the press that worked with him shared some of that glory.

During the same period, the "New Journalism" elevated the humblest and most ephemeral of literary forms to the status of literature. Journalists would now be able to "express themselves"—be somebodies—and even Truman Capote was doing it. Then came Watergate, in which the personas of two *Washington Post* reporters merged with those of Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman. Journalists were the heroes in the slaying of an evil president. Describing the filming of "All the President's Men" in the *Post* newsroom, Sally Quinn observed in her Style article, "Lights, Cameras...Ego," that the actors were awed by the journalists, not vice versa.

Just 400 of my close friends

When Franklin Roosevelt was first courting the press, few would have guessed that half a century later one of the three or four best invitations in town would be an evening with a *Washington Post* editor and a former social reporter— namely Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn. "If Ben and Sally gave a party for their cleaning lady," says one veteran observer of Washington society, "everybody would want to come." At a party this January for two reporters, Elizabeth Bumiller of the *Post*'s Style section and her husband Steven

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Weisman of *The New York Times*, the guests packed into the $2.5 million Bradlee-Quinn mansion included the Michael Deavers, the James Bakers, and the Richard Darmans.

It's gotten so that journalist socialites compete openly. "We put on a hell of a good Christmas party," brags Jack Nelson, whose entertainment budget is generous. "Everybody in town knows that the *L.A. Times* puts on a good Christmas party." (Deaver and Baker were among last year's guests.) Since *L.A. Times* reporter Sara Fritz is president of the Washington correspondents' association, the bureau offered to pick up the $30,000 tab for the group's recent dinner at the Hilton.

The elite of Washington journalism, including Nelson, annually celebrate their own importance at the Gridiron Club dinner. Traditionally, top editors and bureau chiefs would orchestrate an off-the-record evening of skits and laughter attended by their publishers and suitably high-ranking administration officials, Congressmen, and lobbyists. In more recent times, the heavyweight correspondents have come to dominate the Gridiron festivities, and it is to their invitations that the White House staff responds. The *Post* Style section unfailingly provides detailed coverage of the event, even though its reporter is made to stand outside the banquet hall, where she scrambles for quotes from the celebrity journalists in attendance.

In 1982, Nancy Reagan indicated the importance of the Gridiron dinner when she chose the event as the spot to launch her counterattack against her image as a rich bitch. Mocking her media persona, Reagan performed in her own skit, dressed in Salvation Army cast-offs and singing an original number called "Second-Hand Clothes" (to the tune of "Second-Hand Rose"). It was not the sort of performance our First Lady would put on for social inferiors, and participants observed that Mrs. Reagan was noticeably nervous during rehearsals. "It was a tribute to the press," says Sheila Tate, then Mrs. Reagan's press secretary, "that Mrs. Reagan cared enough about them to do that, and that she went to their own forum."

These days, however, you don't even have to be the Gridiron to attract that kind of attention. When *The New Republic* last year threw itself an elegant black-tie affair at the National Portrait Gallery in honor of its 70th birthday, it turned out to be a Very Significant Bash. The party was covered by *The New York Times* and led the Style section. The *Post* accorded the glitzy event gargantuan headlines and photographs but teased *New Republic* Publisher Martin Peretz between the lines: "Martin Peretz hugged Gary Hart. Then Martin Peretz hugged Henry Kissinger. And there you have it." In addition to Hart and Kissinger, the 400-person guest list included Jeane Kirkpatrick, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Irving Kristol, Eugene McCarthy, Jerry Brown, and Barney Frank.

Ambience is one of the more visible signs of the new social status of journalists. Where once reporters pecked away at their Royal manuals in dark cubby-hole offices in the old National Press Building, many now toil in bureaus bordering on the luxurious. It would be hard to distinguish *Time*'s new bureau on Connecticut Avenue from the law firms that occupy the rest of the towering marble and glass building, except that the magazine's pink labyrinth of thick carpets and sculpted greenery is, if anything, more elegant.

The L.A. Times's new 32-person bureau was designed with entertainment in mind. It includes a magnificent brass wet bar in the conference room, above which are photographs of the dignitaries who have supped there. (Sandra Day O'Connor posed for a group shot with the women reporters of the bureau.) "We used to use styrofoam cups," Nelson recalls. Now, Ridgewells, an upscale local firm, caters with real china.

Tracking the elusive gaffe

The implications of the social ascension of the capital's press corps are far from pernicious. Many reporters are perfectly capable of earning good salaries, attending fancy parties *and* digging hard for tough stories. More secure in their status, reporters here no longer stand in awe of the powerful people they cover. The days of Roosevelt's "Giggle Gang"—the reporters who sat in the front row at his press conferences and laughed at all his jokes—are probably gone forever.

But the evolution of the journalist socialite also has the potential of taking a toll on the news product. The symptoms are subtle but real. Reporters and editors who see themselves as part of the Georgetown elite risk drifting out of touch with the rest of American life—and their own readership. Ben Bradlee has been an inspirational leader in the *Post* newsroom, but as one veteran Washington reporter points out, "The question is, where does Ben Bradlee get his car fixed? Does *Ben Bradlee* know where Ben Bradlee gets his car

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fixed?" Given Bradlee's lifestyle, the reporter asks, "How can he identify with average people anymore?"

"One's impression," Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote in the early seventies, "is that 20 years ago the preponderance of the 'working press' (as it likes to call itself) was surprisingly close in origins and attitudes to working people generally. They were not Ivy Leaguers. They are now or soon will be. Journalism has become, if not an elite, a profession attracted to elites. This is noticeably so in Washington."

As pay scales escalate, as newsrooms fill up with prestigious specialists on foreign policy and the money supply [see "Insideritis," by Stephen Hess, p. 28], reporters naturally become more remote from the people who read or watch the news. "You find more people who have Ph.D.s from Harvard in Slavic languages and don't keep a flask in their desk drawers," as Richard Cohen puts it, almost wistfully.

Cohen admits he's not comfortable with his status as a well-known Georgetown guest. "I know it's the only way the town can function, but sometimes I feel like picking up my fork. . ." he says, stabbing an imaginary fellow diner. Ambivalent though he is, Cohen still uses "a recent Washington party" as the social context for some of his columns.

According to Cohen's familiar view of "the only way the town can work," a crucial place to get your administration and State Department sources relaxed and talking is in someone's comfortable living room, during the cocktail hour. This is where "inside" information changes hands. Several dangers, however, arise in this setting.

First, journalists can be seduced into participating in relatively insignificant political turf battles involving their fellow party-goers. Mary McGrory, another *Post* columnist, calls journalist-source socializing "calculated." The fact is, a lot of "inside" insight consists largely of high-ranking officials' grinding their axes in hopes that their reporter friends will plant them in a competitor's back. What makes juicy gossip on Saturday evening too often makes page one or the op-ed page as "analysis" Monday morning. Conversely, any number of accomplished reporters and commentators—David Broder, for example—manage to avoid fancy socializing without suffering from a noticeable lack of "inside" information.

There's nothing wrong, of course, with getting a helpful tip from a friendly assistant secretary of Defense just because you meet during a fancy social hour. But what he's likely to reveal will rarely be the whole story, or even the most important angle. The great recent advances in reporting on complex topics, such as military procurement, stem in large part from reporters, many based in Washington, picking themselves up and traveling to the test ranges to see if our guns and tanks really work. Across a wide range of subjects, the best Washington sources are the mid-level congressional staff members and frustrated agency bureaucrats, most of whom you will not find at the choice parties.

A second cause for worry is what might be called the Agronsky & Co. syndrome. As valued guests at Washington social events, journalists come to view their every passing thought on the "news behind the news" as worthy of wide attention. Jennifer Phillips, a well-known Georgetown hostess whose family is connected with the Phillips art collection, explains that "if something like Bitburg happens, you just can't wait to get with a group to analyze it and figure out the implications. It makes for a wonderful, exciting social atmosphere."

"We're the Marco Polos of our day," quips Hugh Sidey. Any dinner guest who seems to know who really wears the pants on the White House staff or what the Geneva arms control negotiators do in their spare time is likely to be a welcome adornment to Mrs. Phillips's salon.

Such chattering has actually been elevated to a journalistic form all its own—the Agronsky-style Washington talk show. Eminences of the trade sit around and trade speculation on the administration's latest public relations blunders and who's likely to run for president in 1992. Frequently, the same pointless navel contemplation goes on in the news pages and on the networks as well. Michael Kinsley of *The New Republic* calls it "gaffe-ology,"—and he's right in arguing that it's of little interest to those outside of journalism and government—certainly few people outside of the Beltway.

In the end, this may be the worst result of reporters becoming social bigwigs: the press tends to get boring when it sees itself as too important. One Washington hostess told *Vanity Fair* recently, "You've got the *Washington Post* Style section, and you use that to write about yourself and your friends. You can tell yourself you're setting the tone for Washington, and I suppose in some ways you are. You're famous because you write that you're famous. This is off the record, of course, because I have to live in this town."■

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Insideritis and Other Maladies of Specialized Journalism

by Stephen Hess

James Q. Wilson, the political scientist, once noted that organizations come to resemble the organizations they are in conflict with. The burgeoning bureaucracy of the legislature, for example, has begun to look like the bloated bureaucracy of the executive branch. It is rather like a football team adopting the formations of the opposition.

The theory fits the press and the government: two institutions in conflict, increasingly resembling each other. The most obvious resemblance is in personnel. The denizens of government executive suites and the Washington bureaus of the major news organizations are becoming interchangeable. In socioeconomic terms—schools attended, income, their neighborhoods—they increasingly look alike; in personal terms, some of them are the same people. At least 11 journalists have served in both *The New York Times*'s bureau and in some recent presidential administration. The most fascinating—and commented upon—case is the Gelb-Burt exchange.

Leslie Gelb left the *Times* at the beginning of the Carter administration in 1977 to become director of Politico-Military Affairs at the Department of State, staying until 1979; Richard Burt left the Washington bureau of the *Times* for the same job at the beginning of the Reagan presidency in 1981. Gelb returned to the *Times* in 1981 as its national security correspondent; Burt is presently the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. While once reporters took jobs in government primarily as press secretaries or spokesmen, the Gelb and Burt examples illustrate that ex-reporters are now moving into policy positions.

The coming together of national journalists and those they report about is the by-product of a forced march to professionalism and specialization in both trades. Journalists, in their search for professional standing since the turn of the century, have created training schools (University of Missouri, 1908); honorary societies (Sigma Delta Chi, 1910); awards for excellence (Pulitzer Prizes, 1917); professional organizations (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1922); professional journals (Columbia Journalism Review, 1961); and, at the pinnacle of respectability, Ph.D. programs in mass communications (University of Minnesota, 1950).

The best predictor of emerging professional status is educational attainment. Today, almost every Washington reporter has been to college, almost half have gone to graduate school, and a third have advanced degrees. Specialized education is particularly common on certain beats. Among Washington legal affairs reporters, for example, 64 percent have graduate degrees, primarily from law schools. Forty-six percent of the economics reporters have had graduate training.

Forty percent of Washington reporters consider themselves 'specialists,' although the definition of specialization in journalism is somewhat looser than in other professions. A tax lawyer, for example, would not consider an experienced reporter covering the Internal Revenue Service (perhaps with an M.A. in economics) to be a specialist in his field. Still, it is remarkable that almost half of the city's economics reporters have specialized training.

Historically, journalism has been the last refuge of the generalist. Furthermore, many journalists predict that specialization will become increasingly common.

Stephen Hess is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. This article is adapted from a study prepared for the MacNaughton Symposium of Syracuse University.

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Specialist journalists work differently from more traditional generalists. Specialists demand more autonomy, which means that control of the product will gradually shift from editors to newsgatherers. Specialists are also more satisfied with their work, which means that they will stay in journalism longer—and longer on the same beat. This could make the news business less lucrative for owners since personnel costs rise with seniority. As specialists remain in place, there will be less room for the entering journalist. The journalism business has thrived on an unstable personnel system—reporters drifting into other lines of work keep costs down and make room for younger aspirants. Thus, while specialists will provide more sophisticated coverage in many instances, they will also create new problems for Washington journalism. Here are a few others to consider:

Small conversations

One of the results of increased specialization in any profession is that it carries with it its own language. David M. Ricci, a political scientist, has written that his academic colleagues tend to hold "small conversations," in which "members of a scholarly community speak mainly to one another in language so specialized and full of jargon that it is largely unintelligible to the public."

Given the purpose of the mass media, a press corps of jargonists would be a disaster. In early June 1982, President Reagan went to Europe to attend an economic summit conference at Versailles, escorted by a 747 filled with White House, diplomatic, and economics reporters. "The blending of three press corps was fascinating," recalls Lou Cannon, senior White House correspondent for *The Washington Post*. "Each asked questions in its own jargon. For example, questions about 'confidence-building mechanisms' always came from State Department reporters."

While reporters have to guard against these tendencies, jargon need not be a major concern in the popular press so long as generalist editors are doing their jobs. The problem will come if editors are intimidated by their specialists. And this is possible. Extensive interviews show that generalist reporters have more disagreements with their home office than do specialists on topics such as story length and writing style. In the newsroom of the Baltimore *Sun*, according to one of the paper's editors, Pentagon correspondent Charles Corddry is called "The General." Who argues with a general?

Insideritis

As the journalist and the source increasingly look like the same person—performing different tasks—more stories will slip into print that are fascinating to the players but irrelevant or uninteresting to those who make their living in other ways.

On December 19 and 21, 1984, there were front-page articles in *The New York Times* detailing what became known in Washington as the Shultz Shuffle or the Shultz Purge, depending on one's point of view. Taken together, the two articles, written by Bernard Weinraub, listed 10 job changes that the Secretary of State was expected to make: five at the assistant secretary level and five ambassadorial positions. Most of the predicted changes were to be replacements of conservative political appointees with Foreign Service officers. The *Times* reported:

"One White House adviser said: 'The Shultz people got the jump on the conservatives by moving swiftly, quietly and with some stealth on these appointments. The conservatives didn't know what was happening until it was pretty well set. Now they're trying to respond'. . .

"'It's not accurate to say people are being fired,' said the [State Department] official, who asked to remain unidentified. 'Some will be leaving voluntarily. Some will be taking other jobs in the administration. In a couple of instances it's dissatisfaction with the level of performance.'"

One characteristic of the insideritis story is that quotations are mostly attributed to "a ranking administration official" or "a senior administration official." Usually this is a disservice to the reader, who has no way of knowing what axes the anonymous speakers are grinding. (In this particular case, however, there was little ambiguity.)

Whether the *Times* articles proved to be essentially correct is not the issue here. Some of the personnel changes were made; some were not. The reporter apparently had good sources, and as the saying goes, a daily newspaper is only the first draft of history.

What should have been clear, however, is that the jobs in dispute were longer on title than on power. They were distinctly a group of middle-level positions. For the right-wingers to fight over any potential losses—no matter how slight—is understandable. For the *Times* to devote two front-page stories to such a squabble is to assume

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Kuehl cuts to the heart of conventional liberalism with an investigation of how well-paid Hollywood entertainment workers shamelessly bilk California's unemployment insurance system. The entertainment unions talk of "survival," but Kuehl visits the unemployment office to find, for example, an actress who earned $77,000 last year while collecting $4,316 in unemployment insurance. "It's no less reasonable for me to collect unemployment than it is for some welfare mother who sits and doesn't do anything waiting for the state to buy her food," the actress told Kuehl.

and

Jason DeParle
The Times-Picayune

In a comprehensive report on capital punishment, DeParle uses computer-generated statistics and thorough reporting to demonstrate that Louisiana executes criminals with an alarming randomness. In the state that has executed more people per capita than any other since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, race, locale, and luck often play a larger role in determining a criminal's fate than the facts of the crime.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation.

The award for stories published or aired in June will be announced in the October issue. Nominations will close July 15. Nominations should be accompanied by two copies of the story or stories.

that the outcome would be of interest to the majority of its subscribers and/or that the outcome was important in its effect on U.S. foreign policy.

Times columnist James Reston would later list such personnel tales as "among the many puzzling pleasures and trivial pursuits" of Washington. Capital residents divide the world between inside-the-Beltway and outside-the-Beltway; these were inside-the-Beltway stories.

Overkill

The present ombudsman of *The Washington Post*, Sam Zagoria, reminded readers in January that his paper had published 12 series between Thanksgiving and New Year's week, amounting to more than 5,000 inches of type. Among the subjects covered were "Africa: The Hungry Continent," "Whoops" (the Washington Public Power Supply System), "Inside the Geographic" (the National Geographic magazine), "Nicaragua's Secret War File," "Lean, Green and Mean: The Army of the '80s," and "The Roots of Biotechnology."

Zagoria made it clear that he felt the *Post* was guilty of journalistic overkill. In his column, he asked: "How many of you read even one complete segment of any of the series from beginning to end?" He says he received calls in support of his position.

Managing Editor Leonard Downie Jr. was not dismayed by the lengthy pieces. "I don't really expect a series to be read word for word," he says. "They serve different publics." (They also win prizes for newspapers.)

One of the most common complaints about generalist journalism is that the media do not treat issues with sufficient depth. But the debate between Zagoria and Downie is really about the coming of professional journalism, whose hallmark will be a great deal of in-depth coverage—on topics of interest to the specialist.

The case that can be made against the way the *Post* covered the 1984 race for the Democratic presidential nomination combines the overkill and insideritis theories. On March 4, 1984, for example, the *Post* ran 12 election stories or opinion columns, amounting to over 12,000 words; on March 25 the totals were 14 stories or columns, adding up to over 11,000 words. Rereading this coverage, one is reminded of a cast of characters who for months filled the national papers with their musings and predictions: Robert Beckel, Kathy Bushkin, Patrick Caddell, Charles Campion, Tim Hagen, William Hamilton, Oliver

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Henkel, James Johnson, Robert Keefe, Richard Moe, Jeanne Shaheen, Paul Shone, Robert Squier, Gerald Vento. If you cannot identify half of these players, then the game—as reported by the *Post*—is not your favorite sport.

In-and-outers

Richard Neustadt was the first to write about "in-and-outers"—that select group who always seem to show up in high appointed office when their party captures the White House, and who then return to careers in such professions as law, banking, and academics until the next opportunity for public service. Only in recent years have the in-and-outers included journalists.

There always have been former journalists in government, but rarely did they return to the news business. The distinction of being first to go from journalism to government to journalism to government to journalism—the true test of an in-and-outer—belongs to Eileen Shanahan, whose resume reads: *Journal of Commerce*, Treasury Department during the Kennedy administration, *New York Times*, Department of Health, Education and Welfare during the Carter administration, *Washington Star.*

Journalism still is not sure how to deal with its in-and-outers. On the one hand, their experience in government usually adds richness to their reportage. Probably no journalist explains the processes of the bureaucracy as well as Leslie Gelb, who besides his stint in the State Department, has worked in the Pentagon and the Senate. On the other hand, how sure can a news employer be that the in-and-outer reporter does not have a hidden political agenda?

Gelb argues that there should be a presumption against news organizations hiring reporters who have held policy or advocacy positions in government. There is no problem, however, with those former government officials—such as columnists George Will, William Safire, and Carl Rowan—whose writing is clearly labeled as opinion.

Still, Gelb proves by his own example that there should be some way to make exceptions. A litmus test that will measure the intensity of one's ideology? The strength of one's convictions? Shanahan contends that reentry into journalism can be based only on an evaluation of the official's past record in the news business, particularly on the individual's commitment to the rules of balance and fairness that govern mainstream journalism.

Co-optation

There is in presidential politics a bend-over-backwards factor: the tendencies we worry about most in a candidate are often those which the candidate goes out of his way to check once he's in office. Former General Dwight Eisenhower, for instance, left the White House warning against "the military-industrial complex."

If there is a bend-over-backwards factor in the emergence of specialized journalism, it is in reaction to the fear that the specialist will be co-opted by his official counterpart, becoming beholden to sources and functioning as a cheerleader for an agency or a policy.

Sociologist Herbert Gans, a careful observer of the news media, contends that "surrendering to temptation...is fatal in the long run, for once reporters have developed a reputation of having been co-opted, they lose the confidence of their peers and superiors." The high regard of one's colleagues is particularly important in the Washington press corps, where, according to my research, nearly half of reporters' closest friends are also in journalism. (The comparable figure for journalists throughout the United States is less than a third.)

Moreover, to date, most specialists in journalism are journalists first. Most of those with law degrees, for example, went to law school after they had worked for a news organization. Frederick Taylor, executive editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, explaining the practice of his newspaper, says, "It's easier to make a reporter into an economist than an economist into a reporter." When in conflict—between the profession of journalism and the profession of the reporter's beat—journalism, with its emphasis on controversy, will probably continue to win.

A larger question is whether specialist journalists will succeed in explaining the strange events of Washington to people who don't live here. Washington insiders—whether in journalism or government—are a breed apart. The fact that government workers and news workers choose to live here implies that they are uniquely interested in politics, diplomacy, and public policy. Those who choose not to come to Washington, I think, are increasingly finding government of minor interest at best, and more often, a major irritant in their lives. The best that journalists can do is to accurately describe and analyze this world to those on the outside. The new-style specialists have the potential to do this better than anyone has ever done—if they can avoid the dark side of professionalism. ■

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WHO'S WHO in the Administration

Some stories are too good to die, and the speculation on who served as **Bob Woodward**'s and **Carl Bernstein**'s Watergate "Deep Throat" continues 13 years later. Here's the latest from our sources in intelligence circles: a two-man team of **Fred Fielding** and **David Gergen**. First, think of the two biggest leakers from the first four years of the Reagan administration. (Practice makes perfect?) Then think of which two Nixon staff men have received unfailingly uncritical coverage from *The Washington Post*, which has been so justly unkind to many other Nixon veterans. (Old debts repaid?) Finally, check and see whether Gergen and Woodward were at Yale together. (They were.) Mix it all together and see if it doesn't make sense....

David Stockman has received wide acclaim for his political successes on Capitol Hill, but few have understood the profoundly different approach he has taken in running the Office of Management and Budget. **Jonathan Rauch** of the *National Journal* explains that Stockman's experience in Congress prevented him from falling into the trap of assuming that his job was done when he sent the White House budget up to the Hill. Before joining the Reagan administration, Stockman had spent four years as a Republican House member and before that had worked on the Hill since 1970. He brought more congressional experience to the budget post than any director since the 1930s. Working with a team of his former Hill staff members, Stockman quickly reoriented OMB's purpose from merely preparing the president's financial plan to shaping a piece of legislation likely to win congressional approval. Then he cut the deals necessary to win that approval. "Results matter," Rauch quotes one member of Stockman's staff as saying. "And the real locus of results is what Congress does with what the president is proposing, not just what the president is proposing."...

Given Stockman's firm grasp of the helm at OMB, it remains a mystery why he doesn't get rid of Deputy Director **Joseph Wright Jr.** Wright is the person responsible for OMB's emphasis on weighing the dollar value of human life when regulating industry. We've pointed out how ghoulish this cost-benefit analysis gets in areas such as asbestos clean-up ("Tilting at Windmills," May). Moreover, Stockman reportedly dislikes Wright personally. Why doesn't the deputy get the heave-ho?...

For the books, which are the three worst post-Vietnam military planning disasters, according to people in the national security business who ought to know? In ascending order: The Mayaguez recapture, which resulted in 41 deaths because **Gerald Ford** tried to run the operation from the White House. Next, the failed helicopter rescue of the American hostages from Iran, bungled by **Jimmy Carter**, **Zbigniew Brzezinski**, and **David Aaron** because, lacking any military sophistication, they tried to run the operation from the White House. And finally, the loss of 264 Marines in Beirut because they were forced to defend a highly vulnerable position and were restricted from fighting back a variety of attackers. The blame for that one falls on **Robert McFarlane** for trying to run the operation, without adequate information, from the White House. See a pattern?

In

WHITE HOUSE

Deputy Assistant to the President—**Carlton E. Turner** has been a White House adviser on drug abuse policy since 1981.

Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs—**Fred McClure** has been associate deputy attorney general in charge of political appointments.

Special Assistant to the President—**James E. Kuhn** has been in the Presidential Advance Office.

COMMERCE

Undersecretary for International Trade—**S. Bruce Smart, Jr.**

LABOR

Chief of Staff—**Dennis F. Whitfield** has been a United States Trade Representative staff member.

Assistant Secretary for Policy—**Michael Baroody** has been director of public affairs for the White House.

TREASURY

General Counsel to the Secretary—**Robert M. Kimmitt** has been deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs.

Undersecretary for Domestic Finance—**George D. Gould** is a Wall Street banker.

Out

COMMERCE

Undersecretary for International Trade—**Lionel H. Olmer** will join a Washington-based law firm.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration—**Robert Graham** has left to become vice president of the Academy of Family Physicians in Kansas City, Missouri.

INTERIOR

Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation—**Robert A. Olson** will become vice president of Resources Management International, Inc.

LABOR

Assistant Secretary, Occupational Safety and Health Administration—**Robert A. Rowland** has resigned.

STATE

Ambassador to Austria—**Helene Von Damm** has resigned.

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The Consumer News You Never See

by Tony Blinken

Last August, *The Washington Post* Business section revealed that the International Trade Commission had mobilized to stem the flow into the United States of inexpensive Canadian raspberries. The red peril from the north was cutting into the profits of American growers, the *Post* reported: "Canadians appear to be taking advantage of a quirk in U.S. customs law that allows them to ship unfrozen raspberries into the U.S. duty-free during the July and August growing seasons."

The raspberry story ran on the front of the Business section. In a short item on page 3 the same day, the *Post* noted that Ford Motor Company had recalled 361,900 of its 1981-84 cars because they had defective seat belts that might break during front-end crashes.

Somewhere there are a handful of people who were truly alarmed by the ITC's having to intervene in the Canadian fruit situation. Some of them might be right here in Washington—members of the raspberry lobby, perhaps. But a lot more people would probably like to know about seat belts that won't protect them and their families in case of an accident. It's the kind of information that reminds us of how the failings of large corporations affect our lives. On a more practical level, it's also the kind of information you might like to have on your way into a showroom full of shiny new autos.

A lot of interesting consumer news gets buried in the *Post*. In recent months, dozens of stories on dangerous products, ranging from cars to power saws to baby pacifiers, have received only passing coverage from the paper, often on page 3 of the Business section. The Nutone company decides to fix a quarter of a million ceiling fans it has sold because they sometimes fall from their fixtures during operation; "herbal" arthritis pills available over-the-counter in 40 states are found to contain potentially dangerous levels of prescription drugs; the list goes on and on.

Several outside critics, including this magazine, have chided the *Post* for downplaying news that has a direct and potentially immediate impact on its readers. From the inside, Sam Zagoria, the *Post*'s ombudsman, wrote in his column last July that many more stories about consumer safety should receive prominent play—some in the National section. "Newspapers and magazines are part of the marketplace process, contributing to (and profiting from) the sale of a great variety of products," Zagoria wrote. "When any of these go sour, for whatever reasons, I believe the media should share responsibility with the manufacturer and retailer to alert customers to the danger and help them obtain appropriate redress."

Zagoria's admonishment, as well as follow-up discussions he had with *Post* writers and editors, have had no noticeable impact. Several editors flatly dismiss Zagoria's concerns as unimportant, while others explain them away by citing his tenure from 1978 to 1984 on the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The classic explanation for a newspaper seeming to avoid consumer coverage is that the publisher fears a loss of advertising profits. The *Post* probably is not immune to this phenomenon, but as a profitable company with little competition, it doesn't appear to be as vulnerable as the average small-town daily. A better explanation for the *Post*'s downplaying of consumer safety stories begins with the way a major newspaper tends to classify some news as insignificant because it's not startlingly unique and doesn't involve conventional political power struggles. Our perceptions of the pressing events of the day are shaped in large measure by such behind-the-scenes pigeon-holing, as well as by the

Tony Blinken, formerly a reporter for The New Republic, *is a free lance writer.*

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culture of the newsroom, which at the *Post* draws reporters' attention toward the doings of official Washington and away from potentially deadly automobiles.

The science of 'story-ification'

A lot of what newspapers publish comes prepackaged in the form of press releases or wire service reports. Many consumer safety stories—most recall stories, for example—come to the *Post*'s attention in this way. The numbers on the Ford seatbelt problem flash across the VDT screen of someone like Deputy Business Editor Jerry Knight, who makes an initial decision on what the paper will do with the information. Knight explains that the *Post* has certain set standards for determining, first, whether a dispatch merits any attention at all and, second, whether it is important enough to be "story-ified," or assigned to a *Post* reporter for further investigation and possibly prominent billing.

Knight's Rule has the ring of a Holmesian legal test. In order to qualify for story-ification, he says, "it has to be a big recall in terms of numbers, or there must be an imminent danger of injury or death, or the product in question must be widely available in the Washington area."

Story-ification is more important than you might think. By having a reporter track down a recall notice, the Business section greatly increases the odds that readers will get more than an array of statistics. In addition, a story with a *Post* byline is more likely to get good play. All papers enjoy showing what their own people can dig up; whenever possible, editors like to reward reporters' efforts with favorable exposure. If Business thinks it has a particularly important article on its hands, Frank Swoboda, the section's top editor, will pitch it to National at the daily afternoon conference of all of the paper's ranking editors.

Jerry Knight portrays a system in which little is left to chance. "When you keep the [story-ification] criteria in mind," he says, "I think you'd be hard pressed to find a consumer story that we didn't play right."

That depends, of course, on what you consider to be "big" numbers or "imminent danger." In addition to the Ford recall of 361,900 cars, the *Post* has recently buried call-backs involving 31,000 GM sports cars (brake problems), 68,000 GM trucks (transmission and brake defects), and 91,000 Ford trucks (brakes). In several of these cases, people had been injured, although there were no reports of deaths. Clearly, the defective vehicles posed a threat to anyone driving them.

It's not hard to find people at the *Post* somewhat less confident than Knight regarding the seamlessness of the decision-making process. Leonard Downie Jr., the paper's managing editor, concedes that article play "depends to a large extent on a given editor's judgment on a given day, and what the other news is. There are certainly some recall notices that we didn't story-ify that we should have." Others are more direct. "It's a sad fact that the consumer beat has become a back-burner beat that lots of people take for granted," says Swoboda. "The truth is, the consumer movement is virtually dead."

That's a tough one for Ralph Nader—by all appearances, a healthy man—to swallow. While Nader acknowledges that his young lobbyists are no longer a novelty on Capitol Hill, he argues that interest in consumer victimization has never been more widespread. As just one measure, he points out, the circulation of the magazine *Consumer Reports* has hit an all-time high of 3.2 million. In response to Swoboda's eulogy on the consumer movement, Nadar asks angrily, "Is his obligation to serve the readers or to be a political antenna?"

That question cuts to the heart of the matter. What Swoboda frankly admits to is the familiar newsman's fear of getting bogged down by what his colleagues perceive as a stale story. As an editor, Swoboda wants to blaze new trails; likewise, his reporters surely want to avoid being identified with a subject the boss sees as "virtually dead." One former *Post* staff member recalls proposing a series of consumer affairs stories and having them "rejected because, the editors said, 'These are nothing but Nader stories, nothing new.'" This attitude leaves reporters assuming "that Nader's kind of investigation" on consumer issues "isn't for us," says the former reporter.

Of course, Nader's kind of investigations are still needed because Detroit still produces faulty cars and drug companies still sell dangerous medications. It shouldn't take the existence of "a movement"—with some requisite number of press conferences and sit-ins—to constitute news, especially when the stories in question have a tangible relationship to readers' lives.

Sadly, consumer news is dogged by more than one peculiar journalistic orthodoxy. In the days before Nader first warned us about flip-flopping Corvairs, many newspapers treated consumer issues as something of interest only to housewives. It was a matter of that darned

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dishwasher acting up again, not systematic negligence by faceless corporate executives or deep problems in the manufacture of American products. The *Post* ran many of its consumer stories on the "ladies' page," and later in the Style section. Only gradually, in the late sixties and early seventies, did consumer coverage migrate out of Style and into the Metro and Business sections.

But at the *Post*, consumer affairs reporters still have to bear some of the beat's outmoded sexist baggage. Sari Horwitz, a Business reporter who covers consumer issues regularly, says, "A lot of people around here consider consumer problems a 'soft' beat, a ladies' beat—you know, what soap to buy." Horwitz adds, "That's a stereotype that I'd like to help change."

Get the lead out

Almost schizophrenically, the *Post* has made gestures indicating recognition of its spotty consumer coverage, but without seriously attempting to improve it. Frank Swoboda, for example, has claimed the topic as Business section turf—this despite his opinion that the beat is lifeless. Swoboda says that he hopes consumer news will attract new readers to Business. But a huge majority of the actual consumer stories still run deep inside the section. Meanwhile, Business, as well as National, give front-page placement to the regular avalanches of statistics from the Labor Department or Federal Reserve Board, regardless of how obscure and irrelevant this information is to most readers.

Peter Silberman, Business editor until 1982 and now a deputy managing editor, argues that his innovation of running recall stories under a regular column heading has helped readers find their way to consumer news. "I felt they should be anchored in one place," says Silberman. "The assumption was that once you train readers to look in a certain place, they will find them."

Silberman seems to think that people burrow through a newspaper to find recall stories with the determination of a Wall Street investor looking for the stock quotes. But with all the consumer products crowding our lives, we don't think about possible defects in our braking system or baby stroller until the news hits us, and that's precisely why such news should be featured prominently.

Even a hypothetical recall maven, who lives for revelations of exploding gas tanks, would have trouble finding his favorites in the *Post*. Take the Business section of May 31: you would have had to forge past the stories on tax reform and routine corporate jousting; past the agate-type daily stock, bond, and commodity reports; all the way back to the lower right-hand corner of page D10 to find—admittedly, under the heading, "Recall"—a five-inch wire service report that GM had called back 197,000 Buicks equipped with bumpers that could fracture on impact and puncture the cars' fuel tanks.

Frank Swoboda isn't dismayed in the least. "I would have no sense of remorse," he says, "if a person got zapped by a killer toaster because he failed to look inside the financial section."

The implicit message from Business is that product mishaps aren't really consumer news at all. This information—these lifeless six-digit numbers—aren't presented to warn buyers about bad cars; they're there to tip off investors and stock brokers that GM or Ford had a little setback.

Consider another recent item about the recall of 6,000 Land O'Lakes turkey roasts which may have contained fragments of metal. The *Post* ran the tiny blurb in the lower right-hand corner of page two of the Business section. To the left and above was "Hutton Barred From Some Business"; to the right, on the lower left-hand corner of page 3, the regular feature, "What Stocks Did." Many shoppers no doubt would be fascinated to learn what processing techniques bring turkeys in contact with metal fragments, not to mention whether their own supermarket stocks the suspect birds.

Following the feds

The way to bring attention to metal-laden poultry is to get them out of Business and into the general news sections, as Sam Zagoria recommends. On the most explosive consumer stories the *Post* sometimes does this, providing an excellent combination of intelligent reporting and prominent play. Morton Mintz's series this spring on the ongoing Dalkon Shield scandal was one such front-page success. Covering the Maryland banking crisis, an entire squadron of *Post* reporters made an obvious effort to explain how consumers' savings and communities' stability had been endangered by egregious mismanagement. The paper also supplied useful guidance as to how readers should react to the confusing situation.

But these occasional displays of superior journalism only make the *Post*'s frequent oversights more regrettable. They also raise the question of

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how a consumer story sometimes does get into the spotlight. The near collapse of a neighboring state's banking system would probably make it every time. Why, though, did faulty steering mechanisms in Mazda cars recently end up at the top of the "Federal Report" page in National? And why was there outstanding coverage of brake problems in GM's X-cars? The answer is simple: an official authority, namely, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, investigated the cases and announced that these were big consumer stories. (Even so, putting the Mazda story in the "Federal Report," a collection of bureaucratic news, and under the column heading "Inside NHTSA," is only slightly more likely to catch the typical reader's eye than if the article were buried in the back of Business.)

Several *Post* employees confirm that once a consumer issue receives attention from the federal government, it often gets assigned to a reporter and played more prominently than it might otherwise. Politics puts a little backbone in that "soft" beat. Canadian raspberries become hot news as soon as the International Trade Commission gets involved.

This spring, Sari Horwitz turned in some solid reporting on the widely publicized dangers of all-terrain three-wheel vehicles. According to numerous accounts, the vehicles have been responsible for injuries to riders, especially children. Explaining why her stories didn't make the front page of Business—let alone the A section—Horwitz says, "It wasn't really considered news because there was no official recall and no official investigation." In other words, the *Post* provides little incentive for an enterprising reporter to pursue the story of a dangerous product before people actually get hurt and the feds decide to hold hearings. You wonder how reporters are supposed to cover nonenforcement of regulatory laws if the issue only becomes "news" once it receives the government's blessing as such.

At the *Post*, the bias toward officially sanctioned consumer news is only one part of a larger syndrome—widely acknowledged by the staff—that favors coverage of national politics over all else. Even Leonard Downie concedes that there is "a natural inclination for this paper to give political, governmental, and diplomatic stories a lot of play. We are constantly trying to go against this tendency in order to give consumer stories, or even human interest stories, more emphasis."

The same syndrome affects the direction and success of individual reporters' careers. Metro and Business reporters tend to be treated as second-class citizens at the *Post*; the path to real recognition inevitably leads to the National or Foreign staffs. Moreover, reporters who pursue major investigations in areas outside of politics, such as consumer affairs, tend to receive only sporadic encouragement at best. Morton Mintz's career is instructive in this context.

Known as the "dean of consumer reporting," Mintz, 63, broke the story of the health risks of Thalidomide in 1962. He wrote a widely heralded book on the drug manufacturing business which, along with Nader's *Unsafe at Any Speed*, helped ignite national interest in consumer issues. But several people familiar with the *Post* concurred in interviews that Mintz's work, while occasionally given prominent play over the years, has never earned him the respect accorded less-skilled reporters specializing in politics.

"Mintz had the best network of consumer-oriented groups," says a former *Post* reporter who also wrote about consumer affairs. "He was the lightning rod for these groups. . .the Drew Pearson/Jack Anderson of consumerism. Yet [senior *Post* editors] systematically diverted him from that role." Today, Mintz, who declines comment on this matter, is thought of as an isolated veteran who gets only rare opportunities, such as the Dalkon Shield series, to demonstrate his considerable talent.

The *Post* came into its own by breaking open Watergate and helping to bring down Richard Nixon. An understandable, and frequently constructive, pressure pervades the newspaper to live up to that standard—to uncover official misconduct, to get the next "holy shit" story, as Bob Woodward himself puts it. This goal, however, has its dark side as well. It creates a moral setting in which revealing scandal and tracking the relationships of the politically powerful are the greatest goods. Forgotten are the people who are supposed to benefit from the insight a major newspaper can provide. Matters of day-to-day concern to readers become filler for the back of the Business section.

Great stories are waiting out there. The *Post* could easily devote some of its vast energies to prompting recalls—and truly protecting consumers—rather than merely reciting the grim numbers after the fact. By failing to take on the problem of defective products in a systematic way, the *Post* has passed up an opportunity to expose the corporate culture which tolerates risks to consumers and shamelessly covers up dangerous failures. ■

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

Presidential Documents

Federal Register
Vol. 50, No. 32
Friday, February 15, 1985

Presidential Determination No. 85-4 of February 4, 1985

Eligibility of Malawi To Make Purchases of Defense Articles and Defense Services Under the Arms Export Control Act

Memorandum for the Honorable George P. Shultz, the Secretary of State

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 3(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and defense services to the Government of Malawi will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are directed on my behalf to report this finding to the Congress.

This finding shall be published in the **Federal Register.**

Ronald Reagan

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, February 4, 1985.

[FR Doc. 85-3996
Filed 2-13-85; 12:33 pm]
Billing code 3195-01-M

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Operation

Throughout the 50s and 60s, the U. S. Army tested our vulnerability to a Soviet biological attack by spraying germs on unknowing Americans. Now Army scientists recommend renewing the tests, the Pentagon refuses to rule them out, and no one in Congress seems the slightest bit interested.

It would have been hard to pick them out of a crowd: average-looking men walking through Washington's National Airport, carrying suitcases. But the men were agents of the United States Army, and the suitcases were something out of a James Bond movie—disguised atomizers which imperceptibly sprayed unsuspecting travelers with a bacteria-laden mist. The undercover operation, which took place in 1964-65, was part of a nationwide program of so-called 'vulnerability' testing designed to gauge the impact of an enemy-launched epidemic of smallpox.

For 20 years ending in 1969, the Army staged hundreds of these secret germ 'attacks' in a number of cities, using microorganisms the Pentagon claimed were harmless to humans. It wasn't until 1977, during a hearing before the Senate, that civilian experts suggested that vulnerability testing may have caused outbreaks of disease which occured in some of the test areas.

Although vulnerability testing took place only two decades ago, it seems like a bad memory from a distant era—when, for example, we were rehearsing troops for atomic combat by marching them through radioactive fields following nuclear detonations. Many of these soldiers were never informed about the risks to their health; neither were the civilians who lived downwind from the explosion sites in Utah and Nevada, among other places.

It would be inconceivable today for the Army to propose a new round of live nuclear tests on unknowing human subjects. Yet at the 1977 Senate hearing on biological vulnerability testing, military spokesmen insisted their experiments had been safe and refused to rule out renewed open-air germ spraying. One Pentagon witness, Lt. Colonel George A. Carruth, declared that although such operations were not then underway, the Army might well find "a specific area

Leonard A. Cole is a political scientist and writer from New Jersey.

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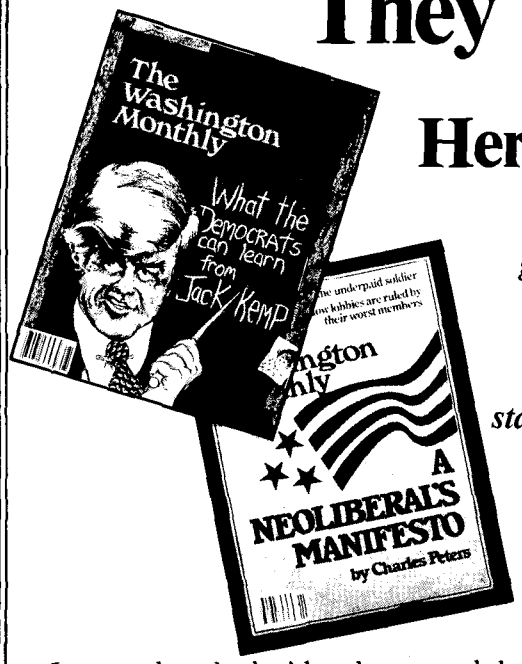
John Kenneth Galbraith

says:

"People don't just subscribe to *The Washington Monthly*. They read it."



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might require additional germ spraying, and there was never any follow-up investigation to determine whether vulnerability testing had indeed caused health problems. The hearing, said Wilkie, "must not have had a big impact." Neither she nor a series of other congressional foreign policy staff members interviewed had more than a superficial familiarity with the 1977 revelations before the Kennedy subcommittee.

The Pentagon, for its part, seems to be aware of Congress's lack of sophistication in the area of biological weaponry. Just before Congress adjourned in August 1984, for example, an acting assistant secretary of the Army sent a note to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees requesting a routine reallocation of $66 million. The money was to be taken from existing programs and used for several apparently minor projects: new military housing in Europe, a parking garage in upstate New York, a physical fitness center in Pennsylvannia. Tucked among these items was a new "aerosol test lab" in Utah intended for biological weapons research with a price tag of $8.4 million.

Colonel Robert Orton of the Pentagon's biological defense division insisted in an interview that "it is wrong to say that someone was trying to slip one by"—a term that was not suggested to him—"without the approval of Congress." If indeed the military did pull a hidden ball routine to gain approval for a controversial funding request, it wouldn't have been an unusual maneuver. "It's an old trick with weapons systems," said a staff member of the House Subcommittee on Arms Control.

But the familiarity of such gamesmanship doesn't diminish the fact that the Pentagon apparently went out of its way to avoid formal votes, hearings, or debates on the matter. As is customary with such reallocations, the request received only a cursory review by senior committee members of both houses before being approved. After he had signed off on the funding, Senator James Sasser, ranking minority member on the Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction, changed his mind and protested that the Pentagon had not explained precisely what new testing would take place and whether the activity would fall within the guidelines of the 1972 treaty. (Last month, construction for the Utah project was delayed by a federal judge's ruling that the Army must file additional environmental reports on the proposed new laboratories.) Sasser is still nominally pressing his complaint with the Pentagon, but one of his staff members conceded that the senator "couldn't get very much interest from anyone" on the Hill to join his after-the-fact protest.

Who's on first? What's on second?

The issue here is not whether the United States should have defenses available if the Soviets violate their treaty obligations and threaten us with biological attack. Clearly, the Army has a responsibility to develop such defenses within the terms of the Biological Weapons Convention. But the need for adequate protection does not justify spraying germs on unknowing people.

The use of involuntary, unwitting subjects for potentially dangerous military experiments is not, of course, limited to the experience with vulnerability testing. The Pentagon, as well as the CIA, have shameful histories of exploiting human guinea pigs. For instance, in one study which was the focus of a recent case before the Supreme Court, the CIA explored means of controlling human behavior by administering mind-altering drugs without the subjects' knowledge.

Laws now exist to prevent such activity. But as the Pentagon reads those restrictions, at least one form of unannounced weapons testing involving human populations is still permissible: that of biological weapons.

Congress enacted the National Research Act of 1974 in response to revelations that for 40 years beginning in 1932, U.S. Public Health Service doctors in Tuskegee, Alabama had consciously endangered the lives of patients they were supposed to be treating. The government doctors were charged with caring for a group of syphilitic black men, but in fact were dispensing placebos so they could study the course of the disease in live subjects. The 1974 legislation reflected concern not only about the misdeeds in Tuskegee, but also about the rights and welfare of human experimental subjects in general. It provided that every federal agency that engages in research involving human subjects have a review board, which must approve each project. Informed consent is supposed to be a central consideration in such reviews.

At first glance, the Research Act would seem to protect people from Army germs insofar as targeted citizens would have to be informed of and give consent to the spraying before the Pentagon review board would approve vulnerability testing. Not so, says the Pentagon. Relying on semantic gymnastics that would do Abbott & Costello proud, the military argues that spraying

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germs isn't "research" under the law and that people affected by such spraying aren't "subjects."

Open-air vulnerability tests would be conducted to estimate the impact of an actual enemy attack; the tests would therefore be viewed as comparable to a battlefield exercise or an experiment with a new weapons system, according to a Pentagon official who requested anonymity. And battlefield maneuvers and weapons tests do not qualify as research on humans, said the official. Alexander Capron, a University of Southern California law professor who through 1983 headed a now-defunct White House commission on bioethics, confirmed the prevelance of this curious outlook within the military: "If they develop a new battle plan or a new weapon, the Army does not regard that as coming under regulations" on research involving human subjects. Here is how Thomas Dashiell, the environmental expert in the Office of the Secretary of Defense explained it: Before the military uses any weapon in a test situation, "we do a whole series of tests to ensure that they meet military requirements, and that they're not harmful from the occupational, safety, and health aspects." The Army would also obey any applicable environmental regulations, said Dashiell. In other words, the germs would have to be deemed 'harmless'—the way, for example, *Bacillus subtilis* was given the okay for the 1964-65 National Airport operation. Once a weapon is so classified, according to this view, it no longer falls under the terms of the 1974 research restrictions: no review board, no consent.

But even if the Army were to concede that vulnerability testing is indeed "research" covered by the 1974 legislation, people exposed to the germs would not be considered experimental "subjects" for purposes of the Act. Result: the restrictions would not apply. "To me," said Alexander Capron, "it would be pretty clear" that the exposed population is the subject of the experiment. "But to others, when you deal with widely dispersed testing, there may be some question as to who are the subjects." The Pentagon official who specializes in reading the research rules concurred that as far as the Army is concerned, open-air testing does not affect an identifiable subject group, and therefore the people exposed "would not, in fact, be experimental subjects."

This remarkable interpretation of the 1974 law stems in large measure from Congress's failure to oversee adequately the military's activities in this area. Former Representative Andrew Maguire, who served on the House Subcommittee for Health and the Environment, confirmed that ignorance on the subject is rampant and that Congress, in effect, has permitted the military to fashion "loopholes in current law which could be exploited by those who wish to test."

Maguire's fears are most ominous when viewed against the backdrop of an earlier era when the military cavalierly risked human life to test weapons no one fully understood. Thousands of veterans and civilians have brought claims against the government relating to the atomic testing of 20 and 30 years ago. Until last year, none of these plaintiffs had won a court decision. Last May, for the first time, a federal judge found the government negligent in the way it had conducted above-ground nuclear tests in Nevada in the 1950s. The judge ruled that radioactive fallout had caused nine people to die of cancer. They were among a group chosen in a test class-action case involving 1,192 alleged victims. The government has appealed the decision, but many similar claims are pending.

Despite the evidence of outbreaks of infectious disease, only a handful of people have sued the government for harm allegedly done by open-air vulnerability testing; none of the plaintiffs have won. And given the lack of attention paid to the matter by politicians, it's unlikely that biological weapons experiments will spark much public discussion in the near future. "There's a definite sense," said one House staff member, "that, 'well, this stuff went on all in the past. That's history. No one would try it again.'"

It would make it more difficult for the Pentagon to return to vulnerability testing if we had a clear-cut agreement with the Soviets barring *all* biological warfare research and development. But we shouldn't need a treaty to eliminate the possibility of undertaking experiments on our own innocent civilians. That's the job of our elected leaders. Unfortunately, Congress seems to have written off open-air germ testing as a relic from the hysteria of the Cold War.

Asked about the future of vulnerability testing, a former employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency within the Pentagon who now works for the Senate stressed that "there's been a certain learning curve" on biological weapons testing within the military. "People do sit around [in the Pentagon] and talk and say, 'You know we got burned on that last time; let's not do it again.'" But the former DIA employee added, "I'm not at all sure it would be such a bad thing to do tests with harmless simulants—not to see how they affect people, just to see how the things spread." ■

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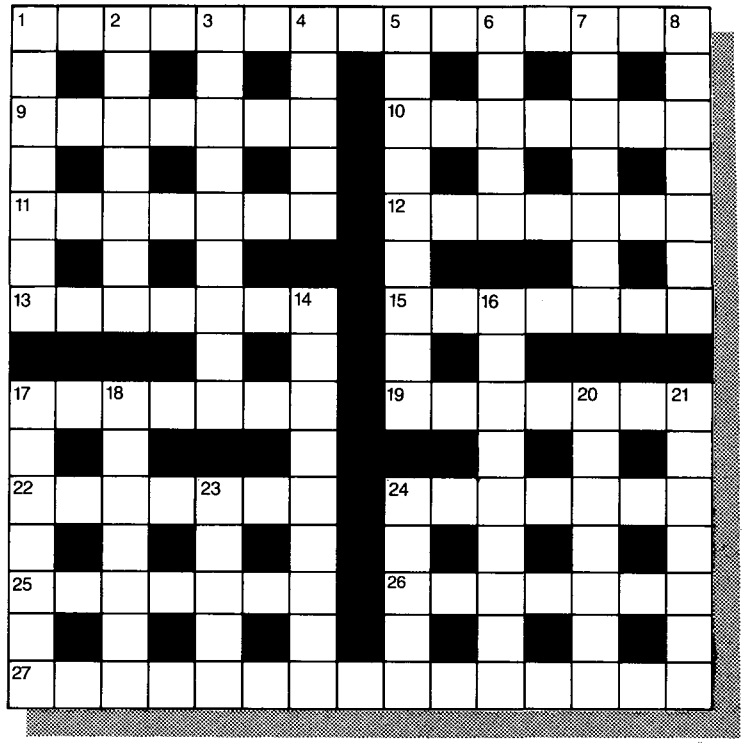
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.



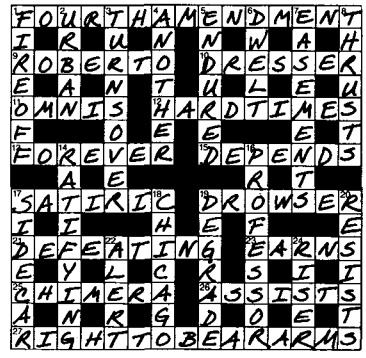
ACROSS

1. Tax reform figure knows, adores knit fabric. (3, 12)
9. Peculiarly true and not tested. (7)
10. Gloss to disappear if Republican leader quits. (7)
11. Discussions place dogs around confused Ali. (7)
12. Inhabitant controlled desire right. (7)
13. Curve or count organized. (7)
15. Possessed sloppy tin weld. (7)
17. Approved easy ID's informally. (4, 3)
19. Hurts stud book stats? (7)
22. State in the manner of two degrees. (7)
24. Late lap shattered leg bone. (7)
25. Most fashionable I see in large box. (7)
26. Sell cur in a way for sportsman. (7)
27. Crazy apes know a doctor and tax reform figure. (7, 8)

DOWN

1. Celtic faith has 499 and 99 follow Joanna. (7)
2. Follows neither snow. (3, 4)
3. Confused hot dry ox follows October 1st convention. (9)
4. Precariously sited movements. (5)
5. Don't bother, Ned took in pests! (5, 4)
6. Monsters in bulldog reservations. (5)
7. Pin refashioned lip ends. (7)
8. Receive property from eccentric tin heir. (7)
14. Appliance switch makes rater rest. (9)
16. Disposal business need? (4, 5)
17. Encases neatly communication sessions. (7)
18. Language translated it "a nail." (7)
20. Scientist of turbulent Oil Age, about 50. (7)
21. Red star somehow played lead role. (7)
23. Warned of later development. (5)
24. Former top-grade course in Rome. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES

The U.S. Army: We're looking for a few good steaks.

U.S. soldiers taking part in war games in California in May shot and killed 74 cattle from a nearby ranch by mistake. "When you give a command to turn off 500 rifles and machine guns," explained an Army colonel on the scene, "it takes a few seconds for the order to go from the lieutenant to the sergeant down to the soldiers."

Why your accountant opposes tax reform.

The National Bureau of Economic Research has found that the total income tax-preparation bill for American households was between $17 billion and $27 billion in 1982.

'Aw, Ron, couldn't you have gotten Loni Anderson?'

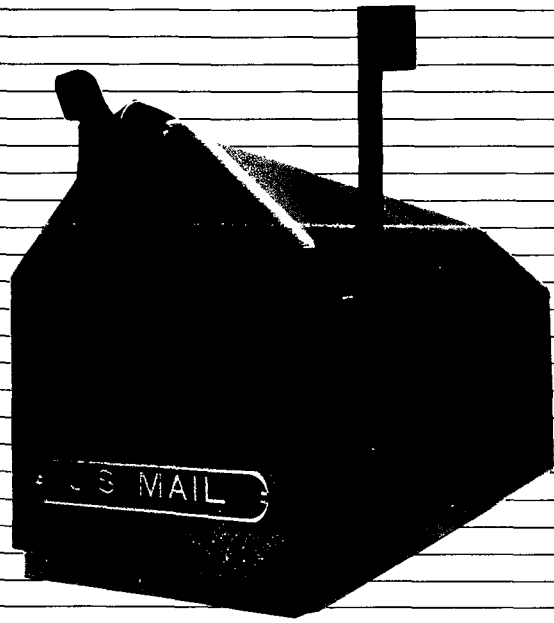
New York Times headline of May 24, 1985: "Sinatra and Mother Teresa Honored by President."

'Hi, there. Come here often?'

The New York Times reports that in major New York rock music clubs the "bathrooms...are very important places for socializing" and that some young professionals are signing up to work as bathroom attendants, earning "more than $150 a night on tips."

You may be hurting, but your L.L. Bean catalogue will be safe.

Now available in mail-order catalogues: "the Nuclear Mail Box." Its inventor George Korycan promises that "it's probably the last mailbox you'll ever have to buy."



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Truth and Myth in Nicaragua

by Charles Lane

The first thing that impresses you when you visit Nicaragua is the very normality of it all. There, in what you have heard is the latest addition to the Soviet Empire, you step off the plane and encounter a huge blue and white poster proclaiming Nicaragua "Another Diner's Club Country." Dozens of other totems of American culture and commerce appear: the neon lights of a Lincoln-Mercury dealership, a "Land of the Giants" rerun on TV, a movie theater showing "The Blind Fury of Bruce Lee." It hasn't been so long since we practically owned the place.

And at first it's possible to believe that all this down-home schlock betokens the existence of something even more characteristically American: political pluralism. *La Prensa* prints bruising anti-Sandinista attacks. Traditional Catholic Masses proceed unmolested. Billboards hailing the Conservative Party decorate the highways ("Free Unions—That's *Conservatismo"*). An enormous red sign in Managua's middle-class Ciudad Jardin identifies the offices of the Independent Liberal Party (PLI); inside, the party's nine National Assembly delegates rock contentedly in rocking chairs.

But there are other images as well—disturbing signs that six-year-old "Free Nicaragua" may not really be so free. In Leon, Soviet-style billboards exhort Nicaraguans to follow the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) "Vanguard"—an obvious evocation of Leninist ideology. Sandinista graffiti on a law office in Chinandega informs the occupant, "Contra, you are being watched. You are on the list." The Director of *La Prensa* displays Interior Ministry documents ordering the censoring of 50 percent of that day's news. The young operator of a market stall denounces government harassment of small businesses and confides that he's considering resisting the military draft. An old woman, complaining about chronic milk shortages which make it difficult to nourish her infant grandchildren, stops when she sees the local representative of the Sandinista Defense Committee. "We're afraid to talk," the woman explains.

From liberation to tyranny

In the United States, the conflicting images coming out of Nicaragua have set off a bitter debate. To many liberals, Nicaragua *could* be just another Diner's Club country. For now, the Sandinistas crack down on political opposition because of the U.S.-sponsored contra war. But the regime's willingness to permit some dissent indicates that an end to American pressure would give Nicaragua the chance to become, if not another Sweden, then at least a left-wing version of Mexico.

To conservatives, however, Nicaragua is already another Cuba, wedded to totalitarianism at home and eager to do the Soviets' expansionist bidding abroad. The only way to ensure that the country pursues policies in line with American concerns about democracy and security is to support the contras' bid to overthrow the Sandinistas.

American conservatives will find very persuasive evidence for their case in Shirley Christian's history of the Nicaraguan revolution*, which is based on reporting Christian did for the *Miami Herald* from 1979 to 1983. Her central argument is that the Sandinistas, driven by Marxist-Leninist ideology, have relentlessly pursued a monopoly on political power in Nicaragua and have no intention of giving it up.

Almost every organized sector of Nicaraguan society joined the 1978-79 uprising against Somoza—students, union members, peasants, professionals, even big businessmen. The original Junta of National Reconstruction, established after the war, included both FSLN members and representatives of non-Marxist, anti-Somoza forces. Indeed, Christian stresses the Sandinistas were not much more popular than the non-Marxists. But they did have two things other parties lacked: an army and Marxist-Leninism. The guns and soldiers gave them a power base; the

Charles Lane, who is a reporter for the Lima, Peru Times, *traveled to Nicaragua this spring.*

**Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family.* Shirley Christian. *Random House, $19.95.*

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ideology gave them discipline and ambition.

So while the FSLN said publicly that it shared its junta partners' belief in pluralism, a mixed economy, and non-alignment, privately the party argued that collaboration with others was only needed to "appear reasonable." The real goal was "revolutionary power" for themselves. As other members of the junta watched with growing unease, the FSLN busily set about building its army; only days after the revolution, the party unilaterally announced its intention to institute a draft and began shopping for arms. By November 1979, 200 Cubans had arrived to train a military and internal security apparatus. The FSLN also established new "mass organizations" under its domination: trade unions; the Sandinista Youth; and the defense committees, which became the inquisitive "eyes and ears" of the revolution. In June 1981, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega declared, "We are never. . . going to discuss power."

One anti-Sandinista leader who could have checked these trends was Jorge Salazar, an organizer of small farmers whom Christian portrays as having been the last best hope of the resistance. A charismatic figure who was enormously popular in the countryside, he was organizing an anti-Sandinista uprising when he was found killed under suspicious circumstances in November 1980. By the end of the next year, almost every important non-Sandinista who had served in the post-insurrection government—Alfonso Robelo, a businessman who headed the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement party; Arturo Cruz, who had been the FSLN's ambassador to Washington; Violeta Chamorro, widow of revolutionary martyr Pedro Joaquin Chamorro—had either left the government or left the country. Even the charismatic Eden Pastora, who catalyzed the Sandinista triumph by leading a daring takeover of Somoza's National Palace, announced his break with the Sandinistas in April 1982. Pastora eventually set up his own contra force along the border with Costa Rica.

In short, the major institutions of one-party rule in Nicaragua had already been established well before the CIA-backed contras began to mount their heaviest attacks. Repression was optional at the end of the revolution. The Sandinistas could have held elections if they had wanted to, and they might well have won. But according to the FSLN's ideology, that course never became an option. Those who continue to argue that the Sandinistas might permit greater liberty once the contra war ends must refute Christian's ample evidence that liberty is entirely incidental to the FSLN's political goals.

Christian suggests that what freedom remains in Nicaragua exists only because it serves Sandinista interests. The FSLN is willing to retain certain forms of pluralism, partly in order to cultivate a favorable image abroad and partly as a response to U.S. military and economic pressures. Even political parties can be allowed so long as they are too weak to pose a real challenge. Hence, the FSLN refused to provide the guarantees of electoral fair play demanded by the Democratic Coordinadora, an opposition coalition led by Cruz, which felt obliged to boycott the 1984 elections. Virgilio Godoy, the leader of PLI, pulled his party out of the 1984 election campaign just two weeks before election day for the same reason. Godoy told me in an interview that the Sandinistas promptly covered the walls of Managua with PLI graffiti, to sustain the fiction that he was still in the race. "My propaganda doubled after I withdrew," he noted. Meanwhile, the tradition of Somoza's docile opposition—the *zancudo*, or parasite, parties—lives on in the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the fragment of the Conservative Party which holds a few seats in the Sandinista-dominated National Assembly.

Those who continue to argue that the Sandinistas might permit greater liberty once the contra war ends must refute Shirley Christian's ample evidence that liberty is entirely incidental to the FSLN's political goals.

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The price of indecision

Christian has no doubts about where we went wrong before the FSLN took power: "The Sandinista front was so small and weak that it probably would have become a footnote to history had a moderate regime been able to assume power in Nicaragua before the end of 1978." But under Jimmy Carter, she argues, "the United States ignored its own significance in Nicaraguan history in refusing to use its power to help Nicaragua evolve into an open society." The Carter people were late to recognize the seriousness of events in Nicaragua, and when they did, they acted indecisively and naively. The administration had no idea how to achieve a transition to a moderate, democratic alternative.

One key blunder occurred in 1978, when Carter sent Somoza a letter praising the dictator for making progress on human rights. Somoza first interpreted it as a sign that he had U.S. support; later, as a subtle rebuke. The net effect was to stiffen his resolve to stay in power and to reduce his trust in the United States. "No one" in the foreign policy bureaucracy, says Christian, "was willing to go to the president and tell him it was a bad idea."

But Christian is disappointingly vague in discussing how to achieve democracy in Nicaragua today. She implies that improvement will require "a more interventionist policy" from the United States. Although she stops short of a flat endorsement of the contras, conceding that the rebels "raise moral and ethical questions," Christian seems to believe we have a duty to arm them. Withdrawing support, she writes, would be "tacit U.S. support" of totalitarianism. The contras, moreover, represent "what little hope there [is] to force the Sandinista Front into accepting major structural changes toward an open political system." Yet as a good reporter, Christian acknowledges reality—that the Sandinistas may well be entrenched beyond the point where even a well-armed contra movement could remove them. She fails to resolve the tension between this fact and her belief that the United States should try to foster real freedom in Nicaragua.

The same reporting could—and should—lead to a different conclusion. You don't have to believe in the goodness of the Sandinista regime—indeed, after reading Christian's book, you can't—to think that the costs of trying to overthrow the Marxists would outweigh the benefits. Even if the contras could win, a possibility supported by little evidence, there's not much indication that the anti-Sandinista rebel movement enjoys widespread popular approval. True, many democrats who once gave the Sandinista regime a chance—Alfonso Robelo, Arturo Cruz, and others—have now joined the contras' political wing. But what's to stop the Somocistas who control the contra military apparatus from squeezing these civilians out of power just as the armed FSLN once did? It's also not clear that the human rights situation in Nicaragua, bad as it is, justifies an American violation of the country's national sovereignty. This is a far cry from Idi Amin's Uganda or Pol Pot's Cambodia.

One could perhaps defend using the contras as a "bargaining chip" to force Nicaragua to negotiate security guarantees with its neighbors and the United States. But even Christian, for all her skepticism over the Sandinistas, believes this goal could be accomplished without further contra pressure. "The Sandinistas appeared willing to satisfy U.S. national security concerns," she writes, "including some kind of agreement terminating Sandinista support for the Salvadorean guerrillas."

Swallowing the bitter reality of a communist regime in Nicaragua hardly means that we shouldn't try to find ways to prevent the same thing from happening elsewhere. One way to do this in Central America is to bind the FSLN to strict guarantees that it will not attack its neighbors—and back our words with the threat of American force. Elsewhere, we must avoid the vacillation and lack of foresight which plagued the Carter administration's policy in Central America. If we are serious about keeping unstable third world countries from falling into the hands of hostile left-wing revolutionaries, we have to be prepared to search patiently for ways to promote democrats who are interested in reform, but who also recognize the geopolitical and moral threat posed by the Soviet Union. We must faithfully nurture people like Jose Napoleon Duarte in El Salvador, Raul Alfonsin in Argentina, Kim Dae Jung in South Korea, and the late Benigno Aquino in the Phillipines.

As Christian puts it, "a democracy...cannot let a situation reach a point that demands black and white decisions about national security and national conscience. The United States should not allow itself to fall into the trap of having to accept, in an area as closely tied to it as Central America, either a repressive right-wing dictatorship...or a repressive left-wing dictatorship." The best reason to read Christian's book is to understand how we failed to find a third way in Nicaragua, and how grave the costs of that failure are. ■

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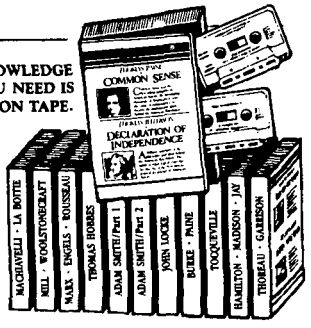

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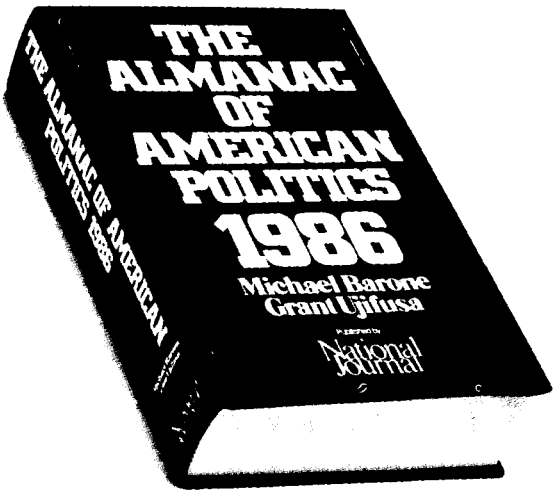

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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

Justice: The Memoirs of Attorney General Richard Kleindienst. Richard G. Kleindienst. *Jameson Books, $16.95.* If George Babbitt were alive today, he would no doubt come to Washington to save the country for the Republicans. Suffused with "can-do" confidence, George would remain loyal to his political patrons, look people in the eye, attend church regularly, and try to be a man of his word. And if things turned out badly for George, he would write a book like this one.

Richard Kleindienst was the famous also-ran of the Watergate scandal. A Goldwater political operative, he entered the Nixon administration as deputy to John Mitchell at the Department of Justice. He followed Mitchell both as attorney general and as criminal defendant. He exited the administration on the same day as Haldeman and Ehrlichman. He pled guilty only to a misdemeanor and was given a suspended $100 fine and a one-month prison sentence by a sympathetic right-wing judge.

All of these events figure rather peripherally in Kleindienst's memoir. Rather, he organizes the book around the great men and women whom he has known. His appraisals of these people provide insight into the mindset of this modern-day Babbitt and his predictable downfall.

For Kleindienst, political values are far less important than the superficial personal values of the Republican mandarins: unswerving devotion to administration goals and, ipso facto, to the country; strong adherence to political principles, whatever the substantive content of those principles; and the keeping of one's word.

Applying these values, Kleindienst creates a bizarre moral landscape, where felons, zealots, and segregationists emerge as fine fellows and ethical exemplars. Thus, John Mitchell, the first attorney general in American history to go to prison, "did what he did out of loyalty to the president and to his presidency. To him that also meant a responsibility to his country."

Kleindienst's commitment to being a good soldier got him into a great deal of trouble. Having lied to Congress about Nixon's ham-handed attempt to have the Justice Department drop the ITT case, he left office in disgrace and pleaded guilty to a crime. Perhaps he realizes, however, that there will always be Babbitts in high places, like the late Judge George Hart, who told Kleindienst at his sentencing that his acts reflected "a heart that is too loyal and considerate of the feelings of others" and that even in the dock, he was "still. . .universally respected and admired."

—*Eric Lewis*

Beyond Human Scale: The Large Corporation at Risk. Eli Ginzberg and George Vojta. *Basic Books, $16.95.* Despite their new "lean and mean" image, major corporations in America, claim the authors, increasingly suffer from the same bureaucratic sclerosis that afflicts other large organizations, such as the federal government.

This is not exactly a revelation—popular writers like Robert Townsend and Thomas J. Peters have helped turn this view of corporate structure into a kind of conventional wisdom. Still, the fact that most large corporations turn a profit perpetuates the myth that they are paradigms of efficiency, even as foreign competitors and small domestic firms eat away at their profit margins. Ginzberg and Vojta do a credible job puncturing this myth by concentrating on the growing dissatisfaction of management personnel; by analyzing the similarities between corporations and other large organizations (the military, the Catholic church, universities, academic hospitals); and by putting the whole thing into historical perspective.

The problems, they believe, stem from the way corporations have

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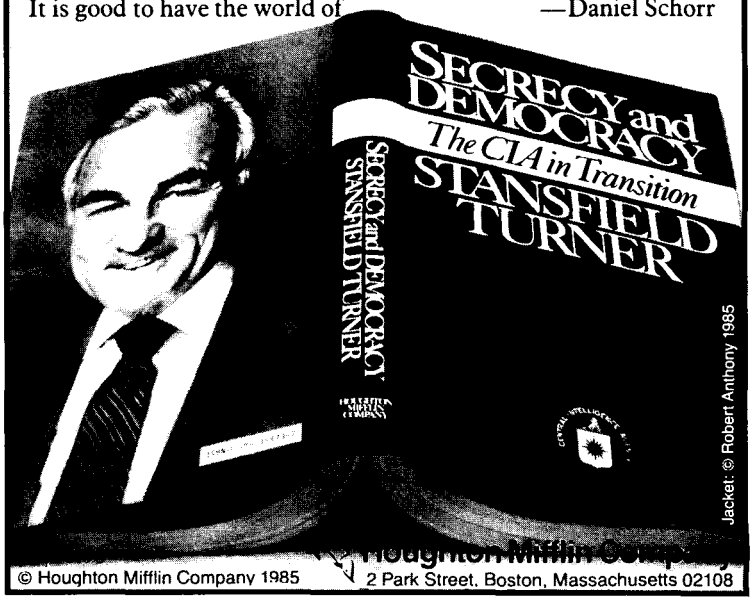

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adapted to their own phenomenal growth since World War II. Senior managers have kept budget authority and control centralized at the executive level, while an expanding and diversifying stable of semi-autonomous divisions have had to compete with each other for scarce corporate resources, such as R & D and marketing support. This has blurred lines of responsibility and accountability, slowed decision-making to a crawl and forced middle-managers to spend more and more time writing reports and battling for turf rather than concentrating on concrete business tasks. CEO's, in turn, tend to exhaust themselves "keeping the peace" among competing divisions, with little energy left over for the more important work of analyzing markets and planning strategy.

If they want to survive and prosper, large corporations must revamp, among other things, their performance-appraisal and compensation systems to reward managers for productive endeavor rather than infighting and paper-shuffling.

The book's message is not as strong as it might have been because the authors offer little evidence and few illustrations to support it—you either buy it or you don't. (Vojta, a career executive at some of the nation's largest banks, also chose not to relate any of his doubtlessly impressive first-hand experience.) One assertion that's hard to buy is what might be called the yuppie's revenge: corporations are "at risk" partly because young, well-educated middle-managers are dissatisfied with corporate life, want "meaningful" careers, and are less willing than their apparatchik elders to "claw and fight their way up the corporate hierarchy." In fact, yuppies seem eager enough to claw and fight their way into other rigid, generally meaningless careers, such as corporate law, as long as they're promised prestige and high salaries. The older generation, on the other hand—and the authors admit this—got on board the management escalator during the 50s and 60s, the "Golden Age" of corporate expansion. Corporate bureaucracy was less extensive, and promotions, raises, power and prestige came more quickly and predictably. Transport today's disgruntled corporate yuppie back 25 years, and he'd be happy as a clam.

—*Paul Glastris*

Funny Money. Mark Singer. *Knopf, $15.95.* Mark Singer's story of the rise and collapse of the Penn Square Bank is at once witty, meticulously reported, and a hell of a story. Singer, a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, found what a journalist dreams of: a controllable subject sitting in the middle of a far-reaching conflict, a small bank that operated during the oil boom as a middle man between the speculators in Oklahoma and major banks all over the country. Singer has also found himself a cast of characters worthy of a great movie comedy: bank executives, such as Bill "Beep" Jennings and Bill "Monkeybrains" Patterson, and borrowers who are as eccentric as J.R. Ewing and twice as foolish.

Singer's prose is direct, clear, and at times, wild. Unlike so much business reporting—there has been an explosion in that area lately—Singer has a knack for tying the facts of the case to a sense of their importance. Here is Singer generously providing what old newspaper folk refer to as "the big picture graph":

"Bad fantasies loomed within easy traveling distance. What if first the Penn Square Bank folded, followed closely by the largest banks in the Pacific Northwest and the Midwest, and what if those failures were followed by the failures of the industrial economies of, say, Mexico and Argentina? What if Western capitalism took a dive? What if global economic apocalypse started in an air-conditioned mall in Oklahoma City—out there in the company of the Stout Shoppe and the Peanut Shack and the video arcade and the gift store where for $12.95 you got a room freshener disguised as a porcelain duck?"

Singer grew up outside of Tulsa, and he evokes the particulars of the place through legwork, memory, and a talent for knowing what to include and what to throw away. There is no fat in his prose:

"In the Oklahoma suburbs, where there are two taco joints for every tree, you see wellheads surrounded by high fences in undeveloped residential zones, you see pumping units in strip-shopping-center parking lots. Four-story derricks straddle the wells on the grounds of the state capitol and the governor's mansion, and it matters very little that so many wells are barely oozing crude—that the derricks' main function is to provide a remembrance of things past. Appearances count. Mythology counts."

—*David Remnick*

Mailer: His Life and Times. Peter Manso. *Simon and Schuster, $19.95.* Did you hear about the time when Norman tipped over the...? Is Norman's bigger than...? Anecdote and reputation: that is the stuff, the stuffing really, of Peter Manso's relentless compilation of 150 interviews on the subject of Norman Mailer.

It's almost as if Mailer has deliberately created himself to be the source not only of shimmering autobiographical work, as in *Armies of the Night* and *Advertisements for Myself*, but also of biography. His life is as evocative and evolving as an endless Oriental scroll painting: early fame, early despair, political and public excursions, triumph and error. Mailer's life calls out for a biographer of brilliance, one able to do a bit more than collect tape recordings.

Organized like George Plimpton's and Jean Stein's book on the femme fatale Warhol socialite, Edie Sedgwick, *Mailer* begins with little Norman in short pants and ends with him writing *Tough Guys Don't Dance* to pay the bills. The collage-interview form here is one of intellectual laziness and provides, at best, an archive for a future biography. One supposes that Manso would like to believe his book "evokes an era." It does not.

But it does provide in the end an

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optimistic portrait of the present Mailer, a bold and singular writer ready to work to the end of his days. All the head-butting, establishment-baiting, dope smoking, marital battling, and honest literary toil ends in a Norman Mailer who is self-aware and generous, in his own words, "concerned with how many books I have left to write. It's no longer a question of is one the champ? I'm a writer like other writers, either better or less good than I think I am. But in the meantime I have a life to work at. And how do I want to lead that life in the time remaining to me? In other words, no more stunts."

—*D. R.*

Childrens' Hospital. Peggy Anderson. *Harper and Row, $18.95.* This is an immensely moving true account of two months in the lives of six children in a hospital in Philadelphia. The story of one, Mark Price, a 15-year-old who died of cystic fibrosis toward the end of the second month, I found especially gripping from its tautly told beginning when he survives a dangerous emergency to his shattering death six weeks later.

Peggy Anderson has been my friend for 20 years. We worked together, first at the Peace Corps, then at *The Washington Monthly*, so I know some will think I'm prejudiced in her favor, which I am. But I can also assure you that aside from occasional flashes of sentimentality and a tendency to ignore the darker side of modern medicine, where greed, incompetence, and indifference do appear now and then, her book is a practically flawless read.

During the Peace Corps experience I shared with the author, I admired the nurses more than any other group of volunteers. *Childrens' Hospital* offers compelling evidence that they remain a clear cut above the rest of us.

—*Charles Peters*

The Righteous Cause: The Life of William Jennings Bryan. Richard Cherny. *Little, Brown, $15.95.* Among some liberals there exists a sentiment that religious-minded individuals, particularly evangelical Protestants, are politically suspect and culturally unfit. The reaction to Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter is a case in point. So, too, was the reaction to a deeply religious man of another era—William Jennings Bryan. When he died shortly after his appearance in the famed Scopes monkey trial, Bryan was remembered this way by H. L. Mencken: "[He] lived too long, and descended too deeply into the mud, to be taken seriously hereafter by fully literate men, even of the kind that write schoolbooks."

Mencken's wish seems to have been realized; who can remember the last time that Bryan's name was mentioned approvingly among liberal activists or at a Democratic convention? Perhaps it is because the Great Commoner stood in the face of modernity and claimed that evolution had no truck with right thinking. Or because he employed metaphors like "cross of gold." Or because he wore baggy pants and wide-brimmed hats and sweated profusely when Clarence Darrow grilled him during the Scopes trial.

What historian Richard Cherny brings to our attention, however, is that the Illinois native also possessed a passionate commitment to liberal values. Not only did he run for president *against* conservatives

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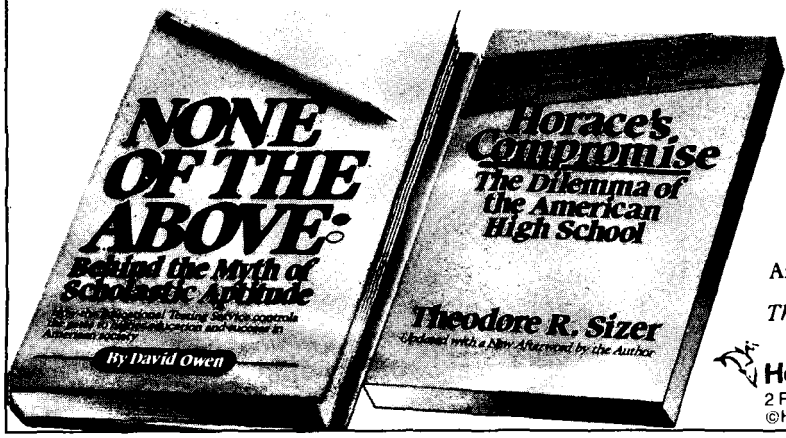

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William McKinley and William Howard Taft, he also worked *for* a progressive income tax, women's suffrage, and self-determination for American colonies. And, according to Cherny, these beliefs were as rooted in his evangelical Protestantism as they were in the writings of Jefferson and the political rhetoric of Jacksonian Democrats.

Cherny argues that the central elements of Bryan's faith included the fatherhood of God, the atonement of Christ, and the brotherhood of man (a concept which Cherny says "unquestionably" included women). "Bryan's belief that all men were brothers reinforced and became inseparable from his belief that all men were equal," writes the author. The fatherhood of God had particular influence on Bryan's commitment to self-government. Bryan once quoted Henry Clay in saying, "It would be a reflection on the Almighty to say he created people incapable of self-government."

Bryan's religious orientation towards equality also reinforced his Midwestern instinct to distrust corporate power. "There is increasing necessity," Bryan wrote, "for legislation which will protect the God-made man from injustice at the hands of the law-created person, known as a corporation." If a corporation "can avoid punishment here," Bryan reasoned, "it need not worry about the hereafter." Prohibiting monopolies and guaranteeing the rights of the individual were the alternatives, and Bryan worked much of his life to achieve them.

Unfortunately, the ethic of service Bryan possessed might seem foreign today. After all, we live in an era in which college students plan to make mega-bucks and presidential candidates deride public servants. Bryan felt strongly "the obligation to contribute in helpfulness," serving his adopted home of Lincoln, Nebraska for two terms in Congress; he also ran for the presidency three times and served as secretary of state for two years during Woodrow Wilson's first administration.

Directly related to Bryan's belief in service was his sense of community. That, too, had a distinctly religious flavor. "No one lives unto himself or dies unto himself," he said. "The tie that binds each human being to every other human being is one that cannot be severed." Each citizen should "exert himself to the utmost to improve conditions for all and to raise the level upon which all stand."

Cherny's closing paragraph might say it best for still skeptical liberals: "The key to understanding Bryan is to approach him on his own terms....As an evangelical Protestant, his concepts of Christian duty and service and his belief in perfection led him to seek to rescue people from industrial oppression and from immorality. As a public figure, he found Christian love more compelling than logic." Not bad sentiments, really. They could help dash the assumption that Christian duty, service, and love are the sole preserve of the religious right.

—William P. McKenzie

Woman on a Seesaw: The Ups and Downs of Making It. Hilary Cosell. *G.P. Putnam's Sons, $14.95.* Hilary Cosell grew up thinking she had her life all figured out. She subscribed to the simple feminist position that success in the workplace equals success in life. Then, after a college degree, an M.A. in journalism, and five years under her belt as a television producer, Cosell became confused. Like a case study from Betty Friedan's *The Second Stage*, Cosell found that it was not enough to be professionally successful. Pushing 30, Cosell wanted a husband, probably children, and the stability and commitment that a family brings.

Cosell's thesis is that women have somehow been caught seesawing between the professional and personal ends of their lives—it's all of one or all of the other—and are unable to balance in the middle. Women's lot, as she describes it, sounds quite depressing: single working women are afraid of getting married (for the compromises it will demand in time or energy) and of *not* getting married (for the "completion" they'll never have). Mothers without jobs are secretly envied for enjoying the richness of family, but at the same time are sneered at for having dropped out of the big-time world of professions, presumably because they couldn't cut it there. Even the superwomen with both families and careers are really "stuporwomen," argues Cosell. They're frazzled, wrung out, and unable to enjoy the fruits of either kind of labor.

In large part, Cosell correctly blames feminism for leaving women in these binds. The most important fact about the women's movement, of course, is that it has done women a lot of good by offering them opportunities in the professional world they never before dared strive for. But the movement has also done women a lot of bad by endorsing the traditional male idea that work alone means success and that life outside work barely counts.

Cosell may have started out with a good idea—to explore how the imbalance between work and families in women's lives causes joy and anguish, fulfillment and emptiness. But it's a good idea with poor execution: Cosell admits she is confused about life's many paths. And she writes as if she's just wallowing in the confusion, rather than thinking through the alternatives and offering the reader a new way to think about life. At a minimum, Cosell could have more honestly guided us through the decisive moments of her own life. After all, she did quit her TV job, and she did recently get married. Yet she backs off exploring her own decisions or finding a message for women in general. "Here come the gibberings and the I dunnos; search me; your guess is as good as mine. How-tos are not my forte," she rambles cutely.

Cosell tells us the least interesting things about herself. We read that she was a comfortable middle class liberal, an Easterner, a feminist, a journalist, a New Yorker at heart. But these are boring labels that only give us a caricature. She could be any one of a thousand faces. Cosell teases us along into figuring out whose daughter she is (we can all

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guess Howard must be her dad), but she won't talk about it. Certainly this must have had a large impact on her life. What is it like? What has it meant to her?

The book's few thoughtful moments come from Cosell's interviewees. From one full-time mother: "I don't believe that being a mother, a nonworking mother, has to be a position of powerlessness and victimization and unimportance.

"If it becomes that, then I think that women are at fault in some way... It means that, once again, women have allowed themselves to be told who they are and who they must be."

Hilary Cosell's book is about ideas that many women and men are thinking about. Unfortunately, the thinking she has done is neither stimulating nor enlightening.

—*Deborah Fallows*

Intimate Strangers. Richard Schickel. *Doubleday, $16.95.* Richard Schickel's message *seems* to be that in today's world, dominated by mass communications technology, there is only one tie that binds: the culture of celebrity. Celebrities are what we can all identify with—they are our new community. Of course, this is assuming that Schickel indeed has a message. He flips the dial so frequently that it's hard to figure out exactly what he's getting at.

The result is a stream-of-consciousness essay whose title was probably something like *Ruminations About Popular Culture* until a savvy editor realized *Intimate Strangers* would sell a lot more copies.

However disconnected, the book contains some ideas worth pondering. Relying heavily on the theories of Jacques Ellul, a French professor of law and social history, Schickel argues that superficially, our political system consists of "impotent rhetorical posturing by political personalities mostly concerned with fostering agreeable images of themselves." "But beneath the surface," Schickel says, "the real work of government—often quite at odds with what its public figures are saying—proceeds under the guidance of a faceless and generally unaccountable bureaucracy."

What's more, he says, we all—politicians, journalists, ordinary citizens—have a vested interest in maintaining this illusion: "To abandon it, and to embrace the chaos implicit in our political reality, is to ask too much." Unfortunately, Schickel doesn't explain the point with any examples, real or hypothetical.

Schickel's theory about modern art is much the same as his theory about politics. Abstract Expressionists like Jackson Pollack are easy to project at a glance, to understand in 30-second splices. The gnomic poetry of, say, a Wallace Stevens—like the byzantine workings of the bureaucracy—is simply too intellectually taxing.

These notions are provocative but unsubstantiated. Perhaps Schickel assumes he cannot hold a reader's attention long enough to provide a thorough discussion. In any case, his style of quick-shot criticism fits in well with the culture he describes.

—*Teresa Riordan*

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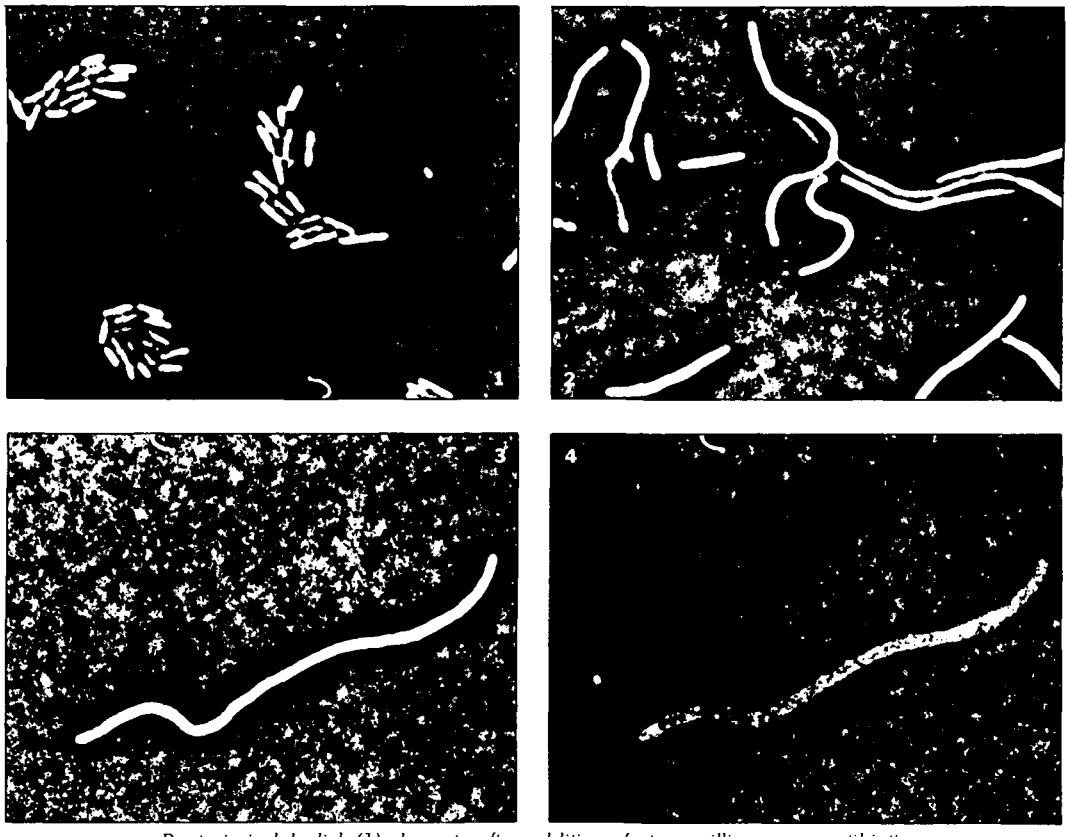

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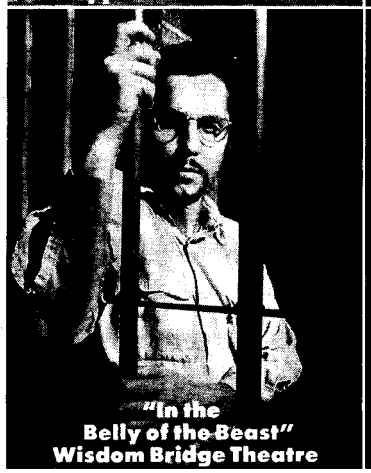

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